

“FEARLESS REST AND HOPEFUL WORK”:
THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT IN INDIANAPOLIS,
1890-1925

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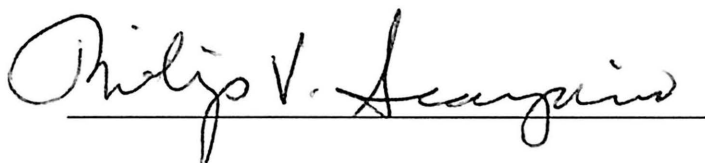
Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
Master of Arts
in the Department of History,
Indiana University

May 2005

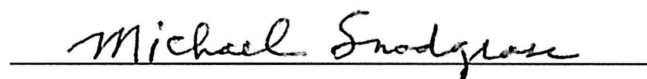
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing this thesis required the support of many people whom I would like to thank. This includes a number of professors: Dr. Phil Scarpino for giving my topic direction, and Drs. Michael Snodgrass and Annie Coleman for helping me shape and make sense of chapters one and two, respectively. Suzanne Stanis at Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indianapolis led me to a treasure trove of historical resources at their library, and Dr. Elizabeth Monroe was always willing to share her architectural knowledge of Indianapolis with me. A special thanks goes to Emily Mack for opening her home to me and educating me about the Recker House.

My foremost thanks goes to my thesis director, Dr. Bob Barrows, who guided me with a lot of knowledge, patience, and a healthy sense of humor. I greatly appreciated all three. Thank you for teaching me history as well as how to write more effectively.

I would also like to say thank you to fellow public history students Susan Fletcher, Carrie Sorensen, and Becca Smith. You were my shoulder to cry on, my reality check, and my reminder that life (and graduate school) is not to be taken too seriously. Susan, thanks to you I will never go to another O'Brien conference without thinking of all our inside jokes.

I could not forget to thank my husband, Kevin, who shouldered so much without complaint so I could complete this work. And to my son, Carter, my muse. I love you both.

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Introduction

What is the importance of art? Throughout history this has been a thorny question. Artists have argued that art teaches, inspires, and challenges; however, critics have replied that art serves no useful purpose and is, therefore, superfluous. In the late 1800s a group of English artists tried in earnest to reconcile beauty and utility with art for the first time, in what became known as the Arts and Crafts movement. These artists believed that by redefining art to mean that which is both beautiful and useful, they could change society for the better.

The movement quickly spread around the globe and became popular in America by the early 1900s. Like England, the United States was still adjusting to rapid industrialization and the changes it brought with it, such as increased urbanization, massive immigration, monopolies and trusts, and a general trend toward the mass-produced and homogeneous. Progressivism was a reaction to these changes, and its adherents perceived the Arts and Crafts movement as an ally. Typically white, middle class, and educated, Progressives appreciated the aesthetics and the reformist elements of the Arts and Crafts movement. With its call for honest construction, simple design, holistic color palette, and integrated interior spaces, the Arts and Crafts style spoke to Progressives' sensibilities.

As early as 1890, artists in Indianapolis became acquainted with the Arts and Crafts movement. Led by artists and art patrons, the city welcomed the movement by degrees. By the end of that decade, in 1898, a coalition led by community leaders, professional and amateur artists, school teachers and children organized Indianapolis' first

exhibit of Arts and Crafts designs. Indianapolis was notable in the adherence of its secondary school teachers to the Arts and Crafts movement. Many times these instructors were professional artists in their own right, and their students' work earned accolades locally and even nationally.

Despite its popularity, though, the Arts and Crafts movement always struggled to overcome its inherent contradictions. It never resolved the problem of providing affordable handmade goods to the public. The movement also suffered from the variable interpretations of its practitioners, some of whom believed machine-made Arts and Crafts goods were acceptable and even desirable over handcrafted items.

This thesis attempts to provide an understanding of the Arts and Crafts movement at the national and local level within its historic context. Chapter One discusses the movement's roots in England and America. Chapter Two analyzes how and why Arts and Crafts came to Indianapolis and with what success. Chapter Three focuses solely on the interplay between Arts and Crafts and secondary art classes in Indianapolis. Finally, Chapter Four evaluates the city's lasting Arts and Crafts legacy in its architecture.

The Arts and Crafts movement flourished only a short time, from approximately 1880 to 1920, but its long-lasting effects remain. As the following chapters will argue, the movement is less significant for what it accomplished than for what it inspired. In the case of the Arts and Crafts movement, art served a useful purpose after all.

CHAPTER I: The Movement: Overview and Development in Indianapolis

What other blessings are there in life save these two, fearless rest and hopeful work? Such rest, and such work, I earnestly wish for myself and for you, and for all men: to have space and freedom to gain such rest and such work is the end of politics; to learn how best to gain it is the end of education; to learn its inmost meaning is the end of religion.¹

William Morris spoke these words in a lecture delivered in support of preservation of historic buildings in England, just one of his many favorite causes. Morris was a published philosopher and poet, an artist and successful businessman, and later in life, a politically active reformer and Socialist. Morris's lasting legacy, however, is inextricably bound to the emergence of the Arts and Crafts movement in mid-nineteenth century England. It is said that Morris successfully put into practice the theories of Oxford professor and influential art critic John Ruskin.² In large part, the philosophy of Arts and Crafts embraced Ruskin's credo that life without art is not worth living.

Proponents of the Arts and Crafts movement shared a dislike of industrialization during the late nineteenth century. They viewed machinery as dehumanizing, replacing the work of skilled craftsmen with mass-produced, shoddy goods. Followers of the movement waxed nostalgic for the Middle Ages, when local craftsmen and artisans supplied the community with its necessary household goods, and were, in turn, respected

¹William Morris, "The Lesser Arts of Life," in *Architecture, Industry and Wealth: Collected Papers*, ed. Sydney J. Freedberg (New York: Garland Publishing, 1978), 47.

²Kathleen R. Postle, *The Chronicle of the Overbeck Pottery* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1978), 7.

for filling a needed role in society. Modern machinery, they believed, reduced workers to mere automatons, requiring from them no creative abilities or providing any intellectual stimulus during their work. Primarily, then, the initial objectives of the Arts and Crafts movement were twofold: first, it aimed to reestablish the dignity of artisans and craftsmen through the elevation of their skilled and communal hand craftsmanship in society; secondly, this was to be accomplished by the production of well made, handcrafted household goods, ranging from textiles to furniture, in which the design's very refinement morally uplifted consumers, who came primarily from the middle class. The movement can be interpreted as both regressive and progressive—advocates harkened back to the middle ages as their ideal and loathed the effects of industrialization on the working classes, but they also addressed the current social problems of their time, believing that the movement's philosophy contained the answer for a better life for everyone.

It is difficult to pinpoint the birth of the movement. It could begin with Ruskin's highly influential *The Stones of Venice* in 1851; or Morris's own home, the Arts and Crafts masterpiece Red House, finished in 1859; or the year Morris and his partners formed their architectural and design firm in 1861. A case could be made for any of them. However, the 1880s seems the most reasonable date for its true start in Britain. Art historian Wendy Kaplan argues that it was not until the 1880s that the movement became aware of itself, and the phrase "Arts and Crafts" was coined by Morris protégé T.J. Cobden-Sanderson.³

³Wendy Kaplan, "The Lamp of British Precedent: An Introduction to the Arts and Crafts Movement," in *'The Art that is Life': The Arts & Crafts Movement in America, 1875-1920* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co, 1987), 52.

Arts and Crafts did not immediately reach an American audience. Historians believe the movement came to America in the 1890s, becoming particularly popular after Morris's death in 1896.⁴ By and large, American Arts and Crafts leaders embraced the philosophies of Ruskin and Morris that work should be rewarding, that environment influences character and so we should care about the quality of goods we surround ourselves with, and thus well made, functional pieces should be accessible to all classes for the general good of the nation. However, American Arts and Crafts philosophy differed from its English counterpart in significant ways. Namely, the Socialist politics of Morris, who despised the rigid class system of England and wished to abolish it, did not translate in the more democratic, less class-conscious United States. American democracy led designers like Frank Lloyd Wright to embrace the machine as a democratic tool, enabling the masses to afford Arts and Crafts goods, a feat unrealized in England.

This point leads to the implausibilities and contradictions of the movement's objectives that were never fully resolved. Firstly, the movement could not reverse the Industrial Revolution, and machines continued to produce most goods. Secondly, Ruskin and Morris called for democratic art, but the high cost of handmade goods precluded the masses from affording them. Instead the very wealthy became Morris's patrons. Lastly, as Arts and Crafts became more popular, collectors displayed pieces rather than using them as intended, essentially divorcing the movement's basic tenet of beauty and functionality.

⁴Ibid.; University of Toledo, William S. Carlson Library, Ward M. Canaday Center, *The Noble Craftsman We Promote: The Arts and Crafts Movement in the American Midwest* (Toledo, OH: University of Toledo, 1999), 8.

The movement was not a complete failure, however, as its legacy lives on in the recent Arts and Crafts revival. This chapter attempts to provide an overview of the Arts and Crafts movement in England and America, with an emphasis on the Midwest. The Midwest was especially active in Arts and Crafts during the late 1800s to early 1900s. With Wright as its prolific leader, the Midwest created perhaps the first truly American style, called Prairie Style, which Wright and others interpreted from the movement and made their own. But to begin discussing Arts and Crafts, it is necessary to examine its origins with the influential writings of John Ruskin.

John Ruskin was born in 1819 in London and attended Oxford University. He was greatly influenced by Gothic architecture and artists, and he supported the so-called Pre-Raphaelite painters of his day. Pre-Raphaelite artists such as J.M.W. Turner and D.G. Rossetti harkened back to a time before 14th century Italian painter Raphael, whose art was known for its overly wrought didacticism, usually crowded with angels and symbolic icons, wherein artists did not render human subjects proportionally. Pre-Raphaelites believed Raphael and his successors negatively influenced art. To counter this, they subscribed to the theories of Italian artists before Raphael, who attempted to paint their subjects as proportionately and accurately as possible. However, the Pre-Raphaelites' subjects were primarily landscapes rather than human, and their architecture was heavily influenced by the Gothic style of asymmetrical structures, usually composed of stone or brick, and sometimes complete with turrets and slender, arched windows.

The Pre-Raphaelites considered contemporary art in the Raphael style to be decadent, and thus immoral, a conclusion Ruskin agreed with and argued vociferously in

his numerous works concerning art. He strongly believed that art reflected the morals and culture of a society, and so his conception of “good” art taught its viewers what to emulate and believe as universal “truths” in terms of Christian morality.⁵ Ruskin argued periods in history that produced an abundance of “good” art usually originated in countries that were enjoying healthy economies, respected leadership, and flourishing cultural activity.⁶ So, for Ruskin, art was both a barometer of a culture’s moral well being and an integral part of a nation’s overall success.

Having established the importance of art, Ruskin reasoned that England’s society was dangerously unhealthy because he declared its art was bad. High Victorianism, characterized by cluttered rooms filled with oversized furniture, fussy accent pieces, and heavy fabrics, was extremely popular at this time. This was due in part to the advent of the machine, which allowed for mass-production of these items, enabling the middle class to afford this style, albeit usually poor imitations of originals owned by the wealthy. This bothered Ruskin on many levels: he was aesthetically repulsed by the bombastically pretentious Victorian style; he despaired the shoddiness of machine-made goods; but most worrisome for Ruskin, he bemoaned the replacement of skilled workers with machines. For him, “the greatest art cannot coexist with smoke, filth, noise, and mechanism” but upon “...the moral fibre of the workman.”⁷

⁵George P. Landow, *The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), 61.

⁶Ibid.

⁷John Ruskin, *Art and Life*, comp. Wm. Sloane Kennedy (New York: John W. Lovell, 1886), 15.

In perhaps his most influential work, *The Stones of Venice*, Ruskin articulated his concern for the conditions of workers, arguing that England's labor was not only ill fed and clothed, but also deprived of enriching work, which to him was just as important for personal well-being.⁸ As his attention turned to the plight of England's labor force, he retreated from his previous work as art critic and began writing social critiques after 1860.⁹ Historian Lawrence Goldman states that "Ruskin was influential at a stage when sections of the working class were developing a common consciousness based upon an ethical anticapitalism which was crucial to the emergence of a separate Labour interest."¹⁰ In his two hugely influential works, the three-volume *Stones of Venice* (1851-53) and *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1884), Ruskin described his utopian vision based on medieval workers' guilds that guaranteed a laborer certain autonomy, allowing for his artistic fulfillment. Ruskin argued that until modern labor could mimic the past guilds, both industry and art would suffer. Additionally, Ruskin believed England's contemporary art reflected its moral depravity, and largely dismissed most of the fashionable taste as vulgar and without artistic merit. It was his idealism based on medieval guilds and the return of joy in labor, combined with a repulsion of contemporary "high" style, that profoundly influenced future Arts and Crafts practitioners.¹¹

⁸Landow, *Ruskin*, 315.

⁹Ibid., 316.

¹⁰Lawrence Goldman, "Ruskin, Oxford, and the British Labour Movement 1880-1914," in *Ruskin and the Dawn of the Modern*, ed. Dinah Birch (New York: Oxford UP, 1999), 85-6.

¹¹Ruskin, *Art and Life*, 17.

Even before his death in 1900, contemporaries interpreted Ruskin's legacy as anti-progressive and old-fashioned. His later writings in particular were stridently nostalgic and critical of the modern world. By the 1930s, however, socialists credited Ruskin as a visionary reformer whose influence helped shape the British Labour party, even though in his lifetime Ruskin believed in strict obedience to England's ruling power. Historian Dinah Birch argues that Ruskin's most significant contribution, however, is his influence on twentieth century social reform.¹²

Given Ruskin's seemingly congruent beliefs with Arts and Crafts philosophy, it is important to remember that he did not identify himself with the movement; rather, his work served to inspire others to put his utopian ideals into practice. Unquestionably, the most important figure to develop Ruskin's theories into practical use was William Morris. Morris was born into an upper-middle class English family in 1834, and he studied at Oxford during the 1850s. While at Oxford Morris read Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*, which argued that art was man's expression of joy in his labors. In *Stones of Venice*, Ruskin's praise of art and workers in the Middle Ages began Morris's lifelong appreciation of medieval art.¹³ But this admiration extended beyond the aesthetic; he was particularly drawn to the collaborative



Fig.1--William Morris

¹²Dinah Birch, "Introduction," in *Ruskin and the Dawn of the Modern*, ed. Dinah Birch (New York: Oxford UP, 1999), 3-5.

¹³Lionel Lambourne, *Utopian Craftsmen: The Arts and Crafts Movement from the Cotswolds to Chicago* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1980), 13.

work ethic of this period, wherein skilled artisans were involved in the process of producing goods from beginning to end, each participating in a meaningful and yet unique way, based on their particular skill.

Thus, Morris combined his love for Gothic architecture and medieval guilds and formulated a “new” style, later dubbed “Arts and Crafts” in 1888 by artisan T. Cobden-Sanderson. What characterizes Arts and Crafts from Gothic, or any other style, for that matter, was the then-innovative idea of total integration. Morris’s own home in Kent built in 1859, called Red House, was the first home built in what is called the Arts and Crafts style, and it exemplifies this nascent design in England. Red House was based on the principle of form following purpose, rather than the other way around.¹⁴ Whereas the

fashionable homes in Victorian



Fig. 2--Morris’s Red House

England were formal and foreboding, Red House was consciously designed as its antithesis: its exterior shape and interior rooms were irregular, and it was laden with

curtainless windows, suggesting

openness and informality. Every room in the house had a specific purpose, and the design matched the spirit of that purpose. For instance, the family room with its great hearth

¹⁴Gillian Naylor, et al., *The Encyclopedia of Arts and Crafts* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1989), 21.

focused on the room's purpose as the family gathering place; the bedrooms provided sunny, cozy retreats; the dining room was the most formal room, but it was still inviting and suggested hospitality.

Another important component of total integration was the use of locally available materials for building. Using materials readily available was not only cheaper, but Arts and Crafts proponents argued that the home would also blend in with the surrounding environment. Lastly, the work had to be "honest," meaning that the method of construction was apparent.¹⁵ This meant that designers exposed ceiling timbers, made dovetail joints in furniture visible, inserted recesses or alcoves in the designs to demonstrate the thickness of the walls, or stained wood rather than painted it, all to prove the craftsmanship and display the beauty of the materials used.

These exposed elements were the "ornaments" in the Arts and Crafts vernacular, as they showcased the construction rather than hide it like the shoddily made mass-produced goods they were attempting to counter. So while Arts and Crafts designers never fully defined the style as one particular "look," it was rather their shared ideals about good design. Part of what set Arts and Crafts apart from other styles was what it was not: it was not Rococo or Victorian or Louis XIV, all of which Arts and Crafts advocates considered too ornamental, phony, and worst of all, not functional. Instead, they looked to the simplicity inherent in folk traditions, primarily from the Middle Ages. An irony, though, is that many Arts and Crafts products were not simple or without useless ornament. Renowned Arts and Crafts designers such as C. R. Ashbee, M. H. Baillie

¹⁵Ibid.

Scott, and A. H. Mackmurdo produced highly ornamented furniture and metalwork that were sometimes overwhelmed with flourishes, and even Morris designed wallpaper that was very intricate and “busy.”¹⁶

Morris based Arts and Crafts philosophy on more than a displeasure for Victorian style and a repulsion of machine-made items, though. There were other elements at work in the late 1800s England that played a part in the movement. Morris cared about the perception of the dying dignity of craftsmen, dehumanized by industry and stripped of artistic control over their production. According to Morris historian Peter Stansky, the movement truly flowered in the 1880s, at a time when class consciousness emerged among the English working classes.¹⁷ The 1870s were a time of economic depression, coupled with England’s diminishing world power, that led to an overall crisis of confidence, Stansky argues. Dissatisfied English workers clamored for a more democratic government that would truly represent them, and citizens began to demand that their government respond to the abject poverty and terrible working conditions of those who lived the richest country in the world. Additionally, nationalism was on the rise, and social critics complained that England, in contrast to the Continent, had never produced any significant art.¹⁸ As Stansky concludes, “Whether consciously or not, Morris and the others were

¹⁶S.K. Tillyard, *The Impact of Modernism, 1900-1920* (London: Routledge, 1988), 31.

¹⁷Peter Stansky, *Redesigning the World: William Morris, the 1880s, and the Arts and Crafts* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 13.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 13-17.

responding to the drive toward a greater democracy in England in the 1880s.”¹⁹ Thus, the movement in England reflected the age, and Morris believed that art was a viable means of reform, especially if it meant inclusion of the very people previously excluded from it.

In his lecture, “Art, Wealth, and Riches,” Morris argued that manufactured goods produced in England were of two kinds. The first he deemed ugly and shoddy, which was meant for the lower classes; the second was better made, meant for the wealthy, but were also lacking in taste. For Morris, “good” art could only be produced by “unassisted individual genius,” implying the skilled craftsman or artisan.²⁰ Arts and Crafts historian Lionel Lambourne states that for Morris, the source of society’s ills was the advent of the Industrial Revolution, and so his solution was to reject the machinery that fueled these changes, and thereby reform society.²¹ But this ideal was paradoxical, for the very idea of mass-produced goods meant wider accessibility for all classes. As art historians Elizabeth Cumming and Wendy Kaplan point out, Morris’s preference for handcrafted rather than machine-made goods actually proved too expensive for the middle classes, his intended consumers, effectively catering exclusively to England’s wealthy elite.²²

¹⁹Ibid., 265.

²⁰William Morris, “Art, Wealth, and Riches,” *Collected Papers*, ed. Sydney J. Freedberg (New York: Garland Publishing, 1978), 51.

²¹Lambourne, *Utopian Craftsmen*, 4.

²²Elizabeth Cumming and Wendy Kaplan, *The Arts and Crafts Movement* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 206.

In 1861, Morris and his circle of artist friends, most of whom shared his affinity for the Middle Ages, formed Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co., a firm based on the collaborative principles of medieval artisan guilds. Chief among this group of associates were architects, but also painters and furniture designers, who worked together on commissions designing everything from residential homes to cathedrals.²³ Thus, the Arts and Crafts style became very popular in England during the 1870s thanks to their wealthy clientele, who fancied themselves the arbiters of taste and sophistication. Morris took over the firm in 1875, renaming it simply

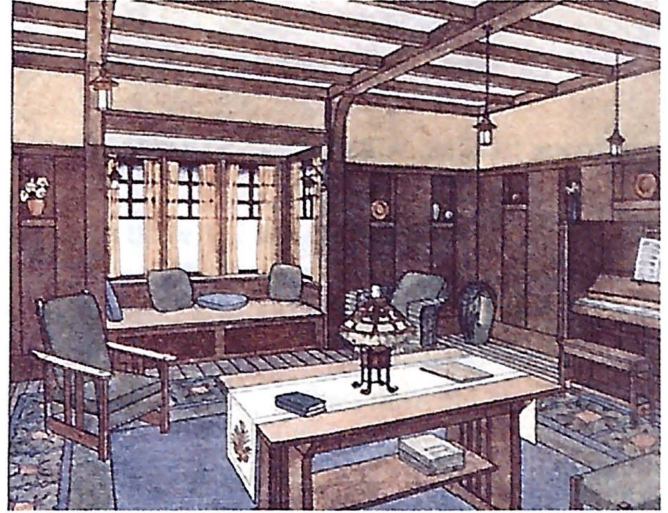


Fig. 3--A proposed design for an Arts and Crafts living room

“Morris & Co.,” and limited the business strictly to interior design, but expanded his services to encompass nearly everything relating to home furnishing.²⁴ Morris personally designed fabrics and wallpaper, employing dyeing techniques used during the Middle Ages, as well as learned various other crafts such as weaving and pottery.

During his time at Morris & Co., Morris immersed himself in Socialist politics and founded the Socialist League in 1885. He eventually focused all of his energies on

²³E.P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 97.

²⁴Naylor, et al., *Encyclopedia*, 11.

advocating Socialist reforms until his death in 1896. Lecturing widely on topics regarding art and politics, his rhetoric reflected his utopian ideals:

I believe the day is not so far distant when the best of men will set to work trying to simplify life on a new basis; when the organisation of labour will mean something else than the struggle of the strong to use each one to his best advantage the necessities and miseries of the weak.²⁵

Morris believed that capitalism actually thwarted art in numerous ways: firstly, its machines replaced handcrafted goods that he believed were intrinsically artistic; secondly, he argued that capitalism's greed forced many into poverty, and thus unable to afford art for themselves.²⁶ The latter aspect was especially woeful to Morris, since he, like Ruskin, believed that art had the capacity to morally uplift its viewer, and so denying art to the poor created a downward spiral from which they could never escape. To counter this, Morris conceived of a "Social Revolution" that would end class and rebuild the "Art of the People, that is to say of the Pleasure of Life."²⁷ Morris's Socialism was based on the notion that a pleasurable life included sufficient material comforts, but most necessarily, the spiritual fulfillment that only came from the beauty of good art.

An aspect of Morris's utopian ideals was to reinstate medieval guilds, similar to modern trade unions. As S.K. Tillyard puts it, Morris's followers understood the guild system to involve craftsmen "working for the common good, without division of labour,

²⁵Morris, "The Lesser Arts," 45.

²⁶Morris, "Architecture, Industry, and Wealth," in *Architecture, Industry and Wealth: Collected Papers*, ed. Sydney J. Freedberg (New York: Garland Publishing, 1978), 58.

²⁷Morris, "Art and Socialism," in *Architecture, Industry and Wealth: Collected Papers*, ed. Sydney J. Freedberg (New York: Garland Publishing, 1978), 77.

and with direct contact between consumer and producer.”²⁸ Even the prodigious Ruskin established his ill-fated Guild of St. George in 1871. According to Lambourne, Ruskin’s guild was based more on building a utopian community than about actually producing goods, but it nonetheless proved influential to the Arts and Crafts guilds that followed.²⁹

The most successful and important of the English guilds that sprang up during the 1880s were the Century Guild, the Arts Workers’ Guild, and the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. Founded in 1882, the Century Guild was the first craft guild. It consisted of a loosely organized group of artisans who claimed to be Arts and Crafts adherents, but they ultimately produced few works in that style, and the guild fizzled out by 1888. Its most important contribution is its magazine, *The Hobby Horse*, begun in 1884, that disseminated Arts and Crafts objectives and practices.³⁰ This influential periodical paved the way for a dizzying array of magazines to be published for Arts and Crafts followers in the 1880s and 90s in England, and later, in America.³¹ The Art Workers’ Guild was established in 1884 and continues today.³² The Guild did not produce goods for sale, but rather acted as a gathering place for England’s craftsmen to meet and discuss ideas. The Art Workers’ Guild was highly respected, with top designers like

²⁸Tillyard, *Modernism*, 14.

²⁹Lambourne, *Utopian Craftsmen*, 14.

³⁰Isabelle Anscombe and Charlotte Gere, *Arts & Crafts in Britain and America* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1978), 111.

³¹Lambourne, *Utopian Craftsmen*, 48.

³²Anscombe and Gere, *Arts & Crafts*, 112.

Morris, Mackmurdo, Ashbee, and Voysey as members.³³ Out of this guild came the creation of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society in 1886, which members formed to show and sell their wares to the public.³⁴ For modern art historian S.K. Tillyard, the Society's first exhibition in 1888 was a symbolic "beginning of the end" for the Arts and Crafts movement because it touted signed work by artists who had previously remained anonymous, as the guild system advocated. Additionally, the very acts of signing and selling their work implied a "fine artist" rather than a craftsman, and thus his work became more artful than useful, which was a basic tenet of the philosophy.³⁵ Truly, the Exhibition managed to turn Arts and Crafts goods into art meant for display only, and this contradictory aspect of the movement was never successfully reversed.

Much ink has been spilled analyzing Morris's life. More recent historical work from E.P. Thompson, Lionel Lambourne, and Peter Stansky examine Morris's complexities and sometimes contradictory behavior. Thompson's book, written in 1955 with a reprint in 1976, particularly evaluated Morris's political life, concluding that Morris was more than a Socialist, he was a "Marxist and a Utopian."³⁶ Moreover, he believed Morris was depressed and unfulfilled in life until he discovered politics in the 1880s, at which time he eventually gave up his interest in the movement for radical politics. Thompson bases this on Morris's role as author of the "Manifesto of the Socialist League"

³³Ibid., 113.

³⁴Tillyard, *Impact*, 3.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Thompson, *Morris*, 791.

in England in 1885, in which Morris advocated a classless society that would benefit the working classes whom he considered to be “treated as a mere appendage to capital.”³⁷ Additionally, Thompson looked to Morris’s works such as *News From Nowhere* and his numerous lectures to argue that Morris excitedly anticipated an overthrow of England’s bourgeois society as a way to reverse the existing social order.³⁸ Lambourne agreed that Morris was a utopian revolutionary, claiming that in Morris’s later years “he became increasingly sceptical about the feasibility of any individual attempt to reform art and society that fell short of the complete overthrow of the capitalist system.”³⁹

Stansky approached Morris in a different way. Rather than “compartmentalize” Morris’s life into that of politics versus art, he believes Morris’s political and artistic lives were equally important throughout his life. This connection, Stansky argues, is apparent when considering that Morris saw art as a tool of subversion and as a way of undermining capitalism by making handcrafted goods desirable to the public.⁴⁰ For Stansky, then, Morris’s Socialism not only included art, but he tried to make art accessible as well as aesthetically pleasing.

In his 1976 reprint, Thompson answered his critics who claimed he was too concerned with painting Morris with a broad Marxist brush. Thompson conceded that he let his personal politics interfere, stating “my pages included some passages of polemic

³⁷Ibid., 732, 734.

³⁸Ibid., 268, 732, 734, 790.

³⁹Lambourne, *Utopian Craftsmen*, 27.

⁴⁰Stansky, *Redesigning*, 7, 67.

whose vulgarity no doubt makes contemporary scholars wince.”⁴¹ However, he still believed in 1976 that Morris despised the situation of the English workers, and it was precisely this despair that drove him to a revolutionary brand of Socialism. In Thompson’s opinion, Morris was drawn to art as a means of escaping the industrial society around him; this refuge in art, however, invariably led him to pursue social justice through politics, and therein Morris found his life’s true work.⁴² Thus, art proved to be Morris’s means to an end, according to Thompson.

The Arts and Crafts movement in Europe only really flourished in Scandinavia, Germany, Austria, and Hungary, according to art historians Elizabeth Cumming and Wendy Kaplan. This was mainly due to recent industrialization of those countries, echoing the English movement’s dissonance. A secondary reason was also linked to nationalism and the desire to produce art that brought acclaim to their country.⁴³ However, the Continent did not import Arts and Crafts in its pure British form; firstly, they incorporated other popular styles, such as Art Nouveau, and secondly, they believed machines could theoretically be used to create quality goods, and thus did not eschew mass production over the handcrafted.⁴⁴ The latter point is key to understanding the basic difference between British and American versions of Arts and Crafts.

⁴¹Thompson, *Morris*, 769.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 795, 809.

⁴³Cumming and Kaplan, *Arts and Crafts Movement*, 179.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

Historians consider the American Arts and Crafts movement to have generally followed England's lead, adopting and emulating British Arts and Crafts objectives. However, some American craftsmen and women created their own style of Arts and Crafts, forsaking Ruskin's call to reject machinery by experimenting with machine-made products. Additionally, whereas England's artisans chiefly looked to the Middle Ages and pre-Raphaelites for inspiration, American artisans did not limit themselves to a specific historical style. In fact, regionalism took hold in American Arts and Crafts, and the style was interpreted in a multitude of ways from coast to coast. For instance, leaders like Gustav Stickley and Frank Lloyd Wright produced very different work, but they both claimed to be adherents of the movement. This reflects the Arts and Crafts philosophy that it is not so much *what* is made, but *how* it is made that is important.

American Arts and Crafts most significant break with English Arts and Crafts tradition is arguably the acceptance of the machine. To understand this, many historians point to the political differences between the two countries as the reason. England's class structure was considerably less permeable than America's. Moreover, England's politicians in the 1880s were responding to working class discontent and desire for a greater democratic government, especially by Socialist reformers. In England, then, the Industrial Revolution became connected with urban blight and the misery of the poorest working classes. Lambourne argues that Americans rather admired industry and all its trappings because they saw it as a way to modernize and compete with Europe.⁴⁵ Additionally, America was less defined by class struggles in this period than by a strong

⁴⁵Lambourne, *Utopian Craftsmen*, 146.

democratic populace who valued personal independence and less government interference, exemplified by the so-called western “frontier.”⁴⁶

Historian T. J. Jackson Lears, however, believed that the real reason behind the revival of handicraft in the late nineteenth century related to an anxiety generated by a seemingly rudderless society. Lears also asserted that the Arts and Crafts movement actually stemmed from a middle class fear of losing “real” experiences. In Industrial Age America, upper and middle class professionals experienced not only a loss of autonomy, but also felt isolated from “reality” in their comfortable office jobs.⁴⁷ For Lears, the Arts and Crafts philosophy’s idealization of manual labor resulted from the desire for “true experience,” and nothing short of demanding physical labor would suffice.⁴⁸ The selfish need for authentic experience, rather than altruistic motives to improve labor conditions, unwittingly drove American Arts and Crafts ideologues.

Further, Lears asserted that, like Progressivism as a whole, the Arts and Crafts’ ideology revealed deep-seated class and racial tensions of the educated bourgeoisie worried about anarchic union agitators, socialists, and the rapid influx of southern and eastern European immigrants.⁴⁹ Unsympathetic with the plight of unskilled labor, Arts and

⁴⁶Anscombe and Gere, *Arts & Crafts*, 34.

⁴⁷T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 60.

⁴⁸Ibid., 70.

⁴⁹Ibid.

Crafts leaders believed that intelligent skilled craftsmen, gainfully employed, would dissipate the need for unions and end labor unrest.

Lears argued that American Arts and Crafts disassociated itself from England's political goal of improving labor conditions because adherents held no real sympathy for the working masses. Assembly lines were the lot of the lower classes, and crafts belonged to the bourgeois with free time. He argues that most American followers were conflicted by their class status and business interests on one hand, and their attempt to reconcile English Arts and Crafts' philosophy of labor reform on the other. American Arts and Crafts' major accomplishment, concluded Lears, was easing the transition into an industrialized capitalism, in which one's work no longer defined one's life.⁵⁰ Thus, Americans stripped the English Arts and Crafts movement of its political components and it became an ideology of aesthetics, rather than reform.

Jackson Lears paints with broad strokes when characterizing American Arts and Crafts leaders as self-interested opportunists, however. While it is true that the American movement lacked socialist rhetoric, it did contain elements of positive reform. Faced with insurmountable competition from industrialization, specialization, and the assembly line, traditional handicraft industries such as pottery, furniture making, printing, and weaving began to ebb in the late nineteenth century. The rise of department stores and mail order catalogs also led to the decline of local craft firms. In addition, the shoddiness of mass-produced goods deeply distressed Arts and Crafts ideologues, who believed in the fundamental importance of art in everyday life. Arts and Crafts leaders understood the

⁵⁰Ibid., 83.

beauty of handcrafted goods to be essential for moral uplift, and pieces made by individual craft workshops came to represent “democratic” art for the middle classes. In this way, crafts served as the aesthetic counterpoint to Progressivism.⁵¹ So, while Lears is correct in stating that American Arts and Crafts accommodated to industrial capitalism, the movement did attempt to eke out an alternative within the existing order. The Arts and Crafts movement’s desire to incorporate beautiful goods into everyday life appealed to idealistic Progressives. By attempting to efficiently rearrange the home and workplace, Progressives took part in the organizational zeal of the period. Arts and Crafts’ holistic designs based on nature suited Progressives, and provided them with an “aesthetics compatible with their social impulses.”⁵²

Yet, as Lears argued, the American movement focused its reform on restructuring good taste, rather than restructuring political or economic systems. Taking a moralistic approach to art, Arts and Crafts followers believed that good art reflected character and inspired its users to become better people. In this context, everyday goods became a further extension of the moral crusades of “good versus evil” that defined the Progressive period.

For these reasons, American Arts and Crafts was actually more successful in implementing some of its objectives than in England. An instance of this was the advent of the bungalow style house. These single-story, inexpensive, utilitarian homes were a

⁵¹Boris, *Art and Labor*, xiv.

⁵²Eileen Boris, “‘Dreams of Brotherhood and Beauty’: The Social Ideas of the Arts and Crafts Movement,” in *The Art that is Life: The Arts & Crafts Movement in America, 1875-1920*, ed. Wendy Kaplan (Boston: Little, Brown, 1998), 210.

logical appendage to Arts and Crafts style that called for simplicity and functionality. The bungalow quickly became popular across the United States, especially among working-class families. Cummings and Kaplan consider bungalows to represent the first “truly democratic architecture.”⁵³

What were the sources of American inspiration for Arts and Crafts design? Actually, there were many. The Shaker and colonial vernaculars were prevalent on the East Coast, Spanish missions and Oriental designs influenced the West Coast, and the Midwest looked to its natural

landscape, such as the vast rolling prairies and farmland, for inspiration. The Midwest, however, was unique in many ways. Nowhere else in America did the Arts and Crafts style flourish more so than here, and its practitioners produced the most ahistorical designs yet seen in the movement, defining a truly American style.⁵⁴

The movement’s origins in America can be traced to the East Coast, where it was primarily interpreted as a colonial vernacular.⁵⁵ The Society of Arts and Crafts was founded in Boston in 1897, claimed to be the first Arts and Crafts organization in the United States and set a precedent for hundreds of others across the nation in the early

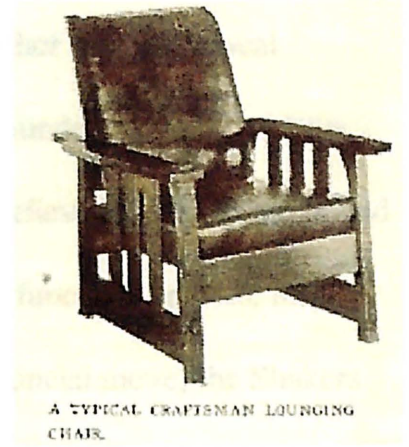


Fig. 4--A Stickley-designed chair

⁵³Cumming, et al., *Arts and Crafts*, 7, 123.

⁵⁴University of Toledo, *Noble Craftsman*, 10.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 112.

1900s.⁵⁶ Similar to Morris's idealization of medieval times, East Coast adherents harkened back to colonial craftsmen who hand made beautiful yet functional goods, and thus enjoyed a position of dignity within the community. Another source of local inspiration was the Shaker communities of New York State, founded in the late 1700s. Art historian Christa Mayer Thurman states that the Shakers believed in a simple life, and their homes reflected this idea. Sparsely decorated with a few functional pieces, their homes echoed the Arts and Crafts philosophy.⁵⁷ In a savvy financial move, the Shakers began making and selling their hand made furniture during the 1860s, helping to spread what became known as the Shaker style.⁵⁸

Gustav Stickley, whom Robert Judson Clark dubbed the "American William Morris," lived in New York State, where he published his incredibly influential Arts and Crafts journal, *The Craftsman*.⁵⁹ Born in Wisconsin in 1857, Stickley was a trained stonemason-turned-furniture maker who was heavily influenced by English Arts and Crafts. After traveling to England, Stickley established his own workshop in 1898 and began producing his "Mission" furniture (alternatively called "Craftsman" furniture)—characterized by large, masculine, and sometimes severe designs made mostly

⁵⁶Ibid., 109.

⁵⁷Christa C. Mayer Thurman, "Textiles: As Documented by The Craftsmen," in *The Ideal Home, 1900-1920: The History of Twentieth-Century American Craft*, Janet Kardon, et al. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993), 101.

⁵⁸Anscombe and Gere, *Arts & Crafts*, 19.

⁵⁹Robert Judson Clark, "The Pacific Coast," in *The Arts and Crafts Movement in America 1876-1916*, ed. Robert Judson Clark (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972), 82.

out of oak.⁶⁰ There is some confusion about the origination of the term “Mission Style.” Some argue that it refers to the purpose, or “mission,” of the piece that was so central to

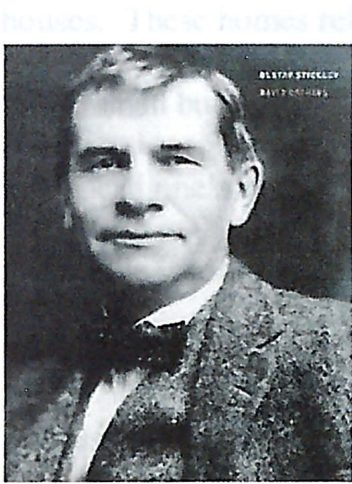


Fig. 5--Gustav Stickley

Arts and Crafts philosophy. It seems more likely, however, that the term derived from the Spanish mission style revival during the early 1900s. Stickley began publishing *The Craftsman* in 1901, and the magazine featured articles about leading British Arts and Crafts proponents such as Ruskin and Morris, as well as practical advice that helped disseminate Arts and Crafts ideas in the United States more than any other publication.⁶¹

One of Stickley’s personal aims was to produce what he termed “democratic” furniture that was affordable for the middle-classes, and to achieve this he unabashedly used machines to make his pieces.⁶² Stickley wrote, “In this country, where we have no monarchs and no aristocracy, the life of the plain people is the life of the nation; therefore, the art of the age must necessarily be the art of the people.”⁶³ Stickley seemed conscious that the Arts and Crafts ideal of true “art of the people” was more likely to happen in America than England due to its foundation of democracy.

⁶⁰Lambourne, *Utopian Craftsmen*, 150.

⁶¹University of Toledo, *Noble Craftsman*, 23, 124, 152.

⁶²*Ibid.*

⁶³Gustav Stickley, *Craftsmen Homes* (New York: Dover Publications, 1979; reprint, New York: Craftsman Publishing Company, 1909), 156 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

Moreover, Stickley also published two books, *Craftsman Homes* in 1909 and *More Craftsman Homes* in 1912, that listed blueprint after blueprint for “democratic” houses. These homes reflected his feeling that one’s house should be inexpensive yet artful, small but welcoming.⁶⁴ Like Ruskin, Stickley stated that one’s surroundings influenced one’s character, and so building the right home was key: “for without exception the people whose lives are lived simply and wholesomely, in the open, and who have in a high degree the sense of sacredness of the home, are the people who have made the greatest strides in the development of the race.”⁶⁵ Thus, Stickley’s advocacy of simple, yet well made homes were in line with Arts and Crafts ideology.

On the West Coast, the temperate climate lent itself well to the Arts and Crafts philosophy of returning to nature. Features such as pergolas, sleeping porches, and courtyards were popular because they brought the outside in.⁶⁶ Historic Spanish missions also provided inspiration--their handmade buildings of locally available adobe bricks and tiled roofs were compatible with Arts and Crafts ideals. Also influential, particularly on the West Coast, was Japanese architecture and natural motifs, characterized by uncluttered interior designs, asymmetry, and organic decorative elements.⁶⁷

⁶⁴Gustav Stickley, *More Craftsman Homes* (New York: The Craftsman Publishing Co, 1912, 7.

⁶⁵Stickley, *Craftsman Homes*, 194.

⁶⁶Cumming and Kaplan, *Arts and Crafts*, 121-2.

⁶⁷Clark, “The Pacific Coast,” 81-2.

In the Midwest, however, radical interpretations of the movement created a twist on the Arts and Crafts style, dubbed “Prairie School.” According to Lambourne, the Midwest (and particularly Chicago) manifested the movement with creative vigor.⁶⁸

Chicagoan Frank Lloyd Wright, considered by some to be the most important architect of the twentieth century, was the leader of this new style.⁶⁹ Wright’s early architecture

during the 1890s resembled the midwestern prairies, with its low-ceiling, horizontal lines that blended in with the surrounding landscape. Purposefully trying



Fig. 6--Wright’s Robie House

to articulate an indigenous American style, Wright’s Prairie School was intentionally ahistorical, taking no inspiration from previous architectural styles. Additionally, Wright’s use of built-in furniture, meaning furniture that was built into the structure of the house, such as sideboards and window seats, streamlined the Arts and Crafts style, creating harmonious integration within the home as well as providing functional use in smaller spaces.⁷⁰ For Wright, everything about the home had to reflect the overall scheme of simplicity, functionality, and beauty, and his innovative use of built-ins gave him control over interior as well as exterior spaces to achieve this.

⁶⁸Lambourne, *Utopian Craftsmen*, 157.

⁶⁹Cumming and Kaplan, *Arts and Crafts*, 131, 135.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 134.

Like Stickley, Wright believed in the potential of machines to make well-made products accessible to the masses. Wright, who considered himself an Arts and Crafts-style architect, nonetheless lectured often in Chicago about the benefits of machines.⁷¹ Calling them “the essential tool of their age,” Wright contradicted Ruskin and Morris’s idealization of the handcrafted as old-fashioned and catering to the elite, while he believed the machine to be “cost-cutting and time-saving,” and thus, more democratic.⁷²

Outside of Wright’s immense shadow, other midwesterners were experimenting with Arts and Crafts, too. Grand Rapids, Michigan, dubbed “Furniture City” during the early 1900s, became a center for making and selling Arts and Crafts furniture. Gustav Stickley’s brothers, Albert and George, began their own successful Stickley furniture business there in 1902. To a lesser degree, Charles P. Limbert’s company produced Arts and Crafts-influenced Mission furniture.⁷³ Grand Rapids mirrored the movement’s decline in popularity by the First World War, and the multiple furniture businesses there never fully recovered.

Like Michigan, Indiana also gained some fame for its numerous hickory furniture companies, most notably the Old Hickory Company in Martinsville, founded in 1892. Their simple, rustic designs, with pieces that had the bark left on, suited Arts and Crafts followers, and their products emulated the movement’s emphasis on the local vernacular.

⁷¹Lambourne, *Utopian Craftsmen*, 160-1.

⁷²Lambourne, *Utopian Craftsmen*, 161; Cumming and Kaplan, *Arts and Crafts*, 139.

⁷³University of Toledo, *Noble Craftsman*, 24.

Stickley even showcased furniture from Old Hickory in *The Craftsman*, giving it his sought-after seal of approval.⁷⁴

Indiana also boasts an array of individual artisans who associated themselves with the movement at some point in their life's work. Indianapolis's Janet Payne Bowles worked as a metalsmith and jeweler from the 1890s until her death in 1948, and garnered national acclaim during her career, with patrons like J. Pierpont Morgan commissioning her work for years at a time. She also exhibited her work at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Art Center in New York City, and the Paris Exposition.⁷⁵ In 1912, Bowles began instructing metalwork classes at Shortridge High School in Indianapolis, continuing until she retired thirty years later.⁷⁶ Given her relative fame outside of the city, Bowles's contribution to Indianapolis's burgeoning Arts and Crafts movement during the late 1800s and early 1900s was highly influential.

It was the art of pottery, though, that really left a lasting legacy for Indiana's Arts and Crafts scene. Considered by William Morris to be the "most important of the lesser arts," art pottery in America enjoyed the most widespread popularity, and thus created the

⁷⁴Ralph Kylloe, "'An Aire of Definite Sincerity'," *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* 6 (Winter 1994) : 47.

⁷⁵Barry Shifman, "Truth To Material," *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* 6 (Winter 1994) : 14-15.

⁷⁶Barry Shifman, *The Arts & Crafts Metalwork of Janet Payne Bowles* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1993), 16.

largest audience for the movement's goals.⁷⁷ Pottery symbolized the Arts and Crafts fidelity to craftsmanship better than perhaps any other craft—made out of natural materials, pottery required creativity in its design, human hands to shape it, and the end product was usually functional.

Like the furniture business, the Midwest was also considered the center of the art pottery movement. In Cincinnati, the Rookwood pottery company, formed by Maria Nichols in 1880, was the vanguard for the entire United States.⁷⁸ Rookwood artisans revolutionized underglazing techniques and the use of colored slips in the production of their pieces, garnering international acclaim and a spawn of imitators in Ohio and elsewhere. Many English Arts and Crafts proponents visited Rookwood, and one noted that the shop was ideal in that it allowed each artisan individual freedom in producing his or her own wares.⁷⁹ This, in fact, was not completely accurate because Rookwood operated as a business—it maximized profits by standardizing designs and breaking down labor into specialized categories. Actually, small art studios personified the Arts and Crafts ideal of artistic control from beginning to end, and one of the better examples is the Overbeck potters of Cambridge City, Indiana.

The four Overbeck sisters—Margaret, Hannah, Elizabeth, and Mary--established the first art pottery studio in Indiana in 1911.⁸⁰ Only Margaret and Elizabeth had any

⁷⁷Morris, "The Lesser Arts," 27; Anscombe and Gere, *Arts & Crafts*, 33.

⁷⁸Cumming and Kaplan, *Arts and Crafts*, 159.

⁷⁹Ibid., 162.

⁸⁰Postle, *Overbeck Pottery*, 51.

training in pottery: Margaret worked at a Zanesville, Ohio, art pottery studio, while Elizabeth studied under Charles Binns, considered the “father” of modern art pottery, in New York.⁸¹ Their philosophy, unquestionably influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, was to create quality pieces that were aesthetically and technically pleasing, but above all, functional.⁸² In appearance, too, their pottery resembled Morris’s palette, with their matte-glazed earth tones, designed with repeating geometric or stylized nature motifs. The sisters produced hand-made pieces that were sold out of their home and at L.S. Ayres & Company in Indianapolis, earning enough to live comfortably, but certainly never extravagantly. In addition to their pottery, Mary, Margaret, and Hannah were frequently published in *Keramic Studio*, a popular and respected national how-to pottery journal. Within Indiana’s borders, and eventually nationally and internationally, the Overbecks acquired respect for their high artistic standards. Exhibitions of their work ranged from the local Indiana State Fairs to the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco in 1915. The pottery continued production until Mary, the last remaining sister, died in 1955.⁸³

Another important Hoosier potter was Roda Selleck, Shortridge High School’s art director from 1881 to 1924. Shortridge’s reputation as avant-garde in the Indianapolis Arts and Crafts movement is well deserved. It was there that the William Morris Society

⁸¹Wendy Kaplan, “Spreading the Crafts: The Role of the Schools,” in *The Art That is Life*, 323.

⁸²Postle, *Overbeck Pottery*, 51.

⁸³*Ibid.*, 13, 56.

was formed in 1905, and teachers working in the Arts and Crafts ethic, like Selleck, and later, Janet Payne Bowles, flourished and greatly influenced their students. Noted American Arts and Crafts artisans like Ernest Bachelder and the Overbeck sisters visited Selleck's art classes to lecture or give demonstrations. Under her guidance, Selleck's students produced pottery that few schools in the country could match. Her students named their pottery "Selridge," a combination of "Selleck" and "Shortridge," and through local and statewide exhibits, Selridge pottery earned many accolades.⁸⁴

The popularity of Arts and Crafts began to decline by 1910, but according to Tillyard, the end of Arts and Crafts was not definitive. Tillyard believes Arts and Crafts had run its course, and the emerging Art Nouveau style of sinewy designs that evoked graceful femininity clashed with Craftsman furniture that suddenly seemed bulky, angular, and oppressive in comparison.⁸⁵ Lionel Lambourne, on the other hand, identifies 1916 as the last year of the movement in England and America. He emphasizes Wright's influential decision to embrace machine-made goods, which changed the course of the movement irrevocably. Proof of this for Lambourne was the 1916 Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society's show in England that year, which reflected changing styles and many machine-made pieces. Lastly, the final issue of Stickley's *The Craftsman* was published in 1916.⁸⁶ The previous year Stickley was forced to file bankruptcy, another harbinger of

⁸⁴Robert M. Taylor, Jr., "The Selridge Pottery of Shortridge High School," *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* 6 (Winter 1994) : 28.

⁸⁵Tillyard, *Impact*, 36.

⁸⁶Lambourne, *Utopian Craftsmen*, 162, 202. *Old House Interiors* (June/July 2002) : 65.

things to come. After World War I, tastemakers considered Arts and Crafts outdated and hopelessly unfashionable.

In the post-modern 1970s, the Arts and Crafts style became popular once again and shows no signs of slowing down. This revival, virtually stripped of its original philosophic meaning, is basically aesthetic. Today's machine-made goods are ubiquitous and unquestioned. In a recent article published in the shelter magazine *Old-House Interiors*, writer Brian Coleman states that today's Arts and Crafts "is an attractive antidote to the impersonal, electronic computer age, yet free of the socialist morality so identified with the movement of a century ago."⁸⁷ So, while the Arts and Crafts revival is reacting to the assault of technology, similar to the original's reaction to the Industrial Revolution, today's Arts and Crafts is really the comfort of nostalgia, not a call to reform. Perhaps in the modern world that is the most one can expect.

⁸⁷Brian D. Coleman, "Arts & Crafts Today," *Old House Interiors* (June/July 2002) : 65.

CHAPTER II: The Relationship between Arts and Crafts, Progressivism, and Art Clubs

Then, with deft hands and glad hearts, the burdens of labor will be to a degree lifted, and the artisan will have joy in his handiwork, because of the fact that his spirit is brought into activity and works together with his physical powers.¹

In 1899, Indianapolis artist and Hoosier Group painter Richard Gruelle wrote these words about the recent Arts and Crafts exhibit held in the city. Gruelle, influenced by the ideas of William Morris and Gustav Stickley, eagerly anticipated the arrival of Arts and Crafts in his city as it meant that Indianapolis had finally joined the nationwide Arts and Crafts movement. For Gruelle and others like him, the American Arts and Crafts movement symbolized a revival of fine hand-craftsmanship through the return of joy in labor. By 1890 the British Arts and Crafts movement had reached America's major metropolitan centers, and its influence continued to spread to the rest of the nation, including Indianapolis, during the following decade. A network of Arts and Crafts societies sprang up all over the United States to popularize the movement, their form and function repeated over and over. Yet, the American Arts and Crafts movement varied somewhat from place to place, and each Arts and Crafts club expressed regional interpretations within the style's idiom.

From the very beginning of the Arts and Crafts movement in England, artisans formed guilds, or societies, for mutual support and assistance. These guilds spread the

¹Richard Gruelle, "At Arts and Crafts Show," *Indianapolis News*, 19 April 1899.

philosophies of John Ruskin and William Morris, and provided a commercial venue to exhibit and sell artisans' wares. Following English precedents, American cities like Boston, Chicago, and Indianapolis established Arts and Crafts societies with varying degrees of success. The societies held events that were open to the public, including guest speakers, lectures and exhibits, and marketed goods.

Although small, the Arts and Crafts Society of Indianapolis filled a niche for local artisans, and the movement garnered the public's support. It appeared during Indiana's "golden age" for the arts, from 1890 to 1920. Hoosier poets and writers of the time, such as James Whitcomb Riley and Booth Tarkington, and artists such as the celebrated Hoosier Group garnered national and even international acclaim. The Progressive ethos dominated the political landscape, and the Arts and Crafts movement's call for reform in design, in industry, and in the home complemented Progressivism. The concept of "New Womanhood" also played a vital role in shaping the movement, by supporting emerging women artists and the expanding public role of female art club members.

Scholars of the Arts and Crafts movement lament the fact that relatively little has been said about the ways in which different regions responded to and interpreted the movement.² No systematic analysis of the way the Indianapolis region approached and interpreted the Arts and Crafts movement exists, and this chapter attempts to fill this gap. As in other cities, savvy artists and art patrons introduced the movement to Indianapolis.

²David Acton et al., *Inspiring Reform: Boston's Arts and Crafts Movement* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1997), 17; Beverly K. Brandt, "'Mutually Helpful Relations': Architects, Craftsmen and the Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston, 1897-1917" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1984), xiv.

Yet, local citizens adapted the movement to address their specific needs in ways that profoundly affected the direction of the city's art establishments for years to come. In an era when art flourished throughout the state, the Arts and Crafts movement found a welcome home in the city. Yet, in many ways, the Arts and Crafts Society of Indianapolis was not unique; it simply copied a style initiated by the Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston. As the first organization in Indianapolis to espouse the ideologies of William Morris, the Society's impact on the city's art tradition still resonates through the establishment of the John Herron Art Institute and the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

In England, prominent artists and architects of the craft revival movement established a series of guilds and societies meant to promote public awareness of Arts and Crafts. One of the first established guilds was the Art Workers' Guild in London in 1884, comprised mostly of designers and architects.³ The Guild set standards of excellence for each craft and ranked members based on their ability to ensure that the quality remained high. As a result, the all-male Art Workers' Guild represented the elite of the Arts and Crafts movement, and established a professional network that eventually dominated the entire movement in England.⁴ Its membership roster read as a "who's who" of the craft revival movement, and included such noted designers as William Morris, C.F.A. Voysey, A.H. Mackmurdo, and C.R. Ashbee.⁵

³Isabelle Anscombe and Charlotte Gere, *Arts & Crafts in Britain and America* (London: Academy Editions, 1978), 112.

⁴Eileen Boris, *Art and Labor: Ruskin, Morris, and the Craftsman Ideal in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 15.

⁵Anscombe and Gere, *Arts & Crafts*, 113.

Developed in 1888 as an extension of the Art Workers' Guild was the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society.⁶ Guild members believed that annual exhibits open to the general public would further increase publicity for their products, and more importantly, help artisans sell their wares. Thus, the exhibits were open to any craftsperson who met the jury's standards. Unlike typical contemporary art exhibits, designers put their names by their objects to publicize and pay homage to the personal craftsmanship involved in each piece.⁷ Additionally, Guild members sponsored lectures and demonstrations for exhibit patrons. True to the political reform inherent in English Arts and Crafts' philosophy, socialist Walter Crane wrote the exhibition catalogues.⁸ Crane infused the catalogues with literature on the political relationship between labor and art, arguing for the reform of the industrial system. Believing that a higher standard of art improved society, Crane looked to handicrafts for the solution. After 1890, the Society sponsored exhibitions every three years until 1916, and the pieces exhibited had a profound impact on design in England and, eventually, America. To complement the periodic exhibitions, the Society also opened a salesroom filled with pieces that passed a jury process. Because of their high artistic standards, illustrious members, and constant self-promotion, the Art Workers' Guild and the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society emerged as the most influential

⁶Ibid.

⁷Boris, *Art and Labor*, 15.

⁸Ibid.

diffusers of the Arts and Crafts movement in England, and most American Arts and Crafts societies simply copied their model.⁹

A city noted for its fine arts tradition and its particular ardor for reform in the late 1800s, Boston was first to embrace Arts and Crafts for both its aesthetic and reform components.¹⁰ In 1897, a group of reformers, educators, architects, and craftspersons formed the Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston (SACB), the first American effort to promote English Arts and Crafts.

Mimicking the structure but not the substance of the English Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, the SACB sponsored lectures, exhibits, demonstrations, and publications in an attempt to influence American taste. Led by Harvard art professor Charles Eliot Norton, the SACB quickly established itself as elitist and more interested in the intellectual ramifications of Arts and Crafts than the actual implementation of its philosophy. The predominantly upper class members of the SACB rejected Morris's socialism and labor reform as dangerous and revolutionary, and focused strictly on design reform.¹¹ Moreover, the SACB's emphasis on the consumer rather than the producer of art further severed its ties with its English counterpart.¹² As a result, a sharp division

⁹Anscombe and Gere, *Arts & Crafts*, 113.

¹⁰Brandt, "Mutually Helpful Relations," 46.

¹¹Edward S. Cooke, Jr., "Talking or Working: The Conundrum of Moral Aesthetics in Boston's Arts and Crafts Movement," in *Inspiring Reform: Boston's Arts and Crafts Movement*, David Acton, et al. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1997), 21.

¹²Boris, *Art and Labor*, 45.

within the club emerged between the intellectuals and the minority of craftsmen, and became a constant source of tension.¹³

As the first successful American Arts and Crafts Society, the SACB acted as the filter of English Arts and Crafts in America. Its early success allowed for the opening of a permanent salesroom in 1904, and by 1907 its membership had grown to 700.¹⁴ The organization's most influential role, however, was as an arbiter of taste. In only a decade, the SACB garnered national recognition and spawned a host of imitators around the country. Boston's leadership position in the American Arts and Crafts movement meant that it often guided and inspired younger societies in profoundly influential ways.¹⁵

Unlike Boston's Society, which concerned itself with aesthetics, the Chicago Society of Arts and Crafts represented greater diversity and emphasized social reform. From its inception, Chicago's movement was inextricably bound to Progressivism when it found its first advocate in Jane Addams, co-founder and leader of the renowned Hull House settlement. In 1897 Hull House sponsored the city's first handicrafts exhibit, which led to the Chicago society's founding in 1898.¹⁶ Addams' reform impulse led her to interpret Arts and Crafts as a tool to bring about industrial, civic, and social change.

¹³Ibid., 22.

¹⁴Walter Muir Whitehill, "Boston Artists and Craftsmen at the Opening of the Twentieth Century," *New England Quarterly* 50 (Sept., 1977): 404.

¹⁵Beverly K. Brandt, "'All Workmen, Artists, and Lovers of Art': The Organizational Structure of the Society of Arts and Crafts, Boston," in *Inspiring Reform*, 34, 40.

¹⁶Boris, *Art and Labor*, 46.

With a thriving membership, Chicago rivaled Boston as one of the most influential centers for Arts and Crafts in America.¹⁷

In addition to its Society of Arts and Crafts, Chicago was home to a number of related splinter organizations. In 1896 the shelter magazine *House Beautiful* published its first edition in Chicago, which included articles and designs by English Arts and Crafts leaders.¹⁸ University of Chicago professor Oscar Lovell Triggs founded the Industrial Art League in 1899, which was based on England's Art Workers' Guild.¹⁹ Triggs, a socialist, advocated a new industrialism and he used the League to educate the public on the ideal relationship between art and labor. In 1903 Chicago also became home of the Morris Society and the first annual Applied Arts Exhibit at the Art Institute.²⁰ Despite the initial intense interest in Arts and Crafts, by 1910 the hub of activity had shifted from Hull House to the Art Institute, and the movement faded.²¹ Moving away from social reform, members' overriding concerns became gradually focused solely on aesthetics. Thus, even though Chicago's movement began with the intent to challenge industrialism, it eventually adapted the SACB's emphasis on beauty.

¹⁷Robert Judson Clark, ed., *The Arts and Crafts Movement in America, 1876-1916* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 58.

¹⁸Anscombe and Gere, *Arts & Crafts*, 33.

¹⁹Boris, *Art and Labor*, 48.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 51.

²¹*Ibid.*

By 1906, more than twenty Arts and Crafts societies existed in America, most of which followed Boston's model and focused on aesthetics.²² Taking their cue from the SACB, they began by holding exhibits and lectures, and eventually opened a salesroom for locally designed *objets d'art*. More successful societies sponsored design schools, such as Detroit's Society of Arts and Crafts.²³ Despite their similarities, the clubs adapted Arts and Crafts to fit the needs of their own communities. As a result, there never existed a unified national Arts and Crafts society, but rather a multitude of regional interpretations and expressions. Analyzing Arts and Crafts at the local level helps to understand the American movement as a whole, since each region interpreted Arts and Crafts in unique ways. In this context, the history of the Arts and Crafts movement in Indianapolis has yet to be written.

Scholars have termed the period between 1880 and World War I as Indiana's artistic "Golden Age." Known for its large number of authors, poets, sculptors, and painters, Indiana attracted national and even international attention during this period. Indiana historians have characterized Hoosiers as joiners of clubs, and the sheer volume and variety of organizations in Indianapolis attest to this fact.²⁴ According to the 1903-1904 *American Art Annual* published by the American Federation of Arts, the relatively small city of Indianapolis supported four separate art clubs: the Portfolio Club, the Art

²²Joy Hakanson Colby, *Art and a City* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1956), 4.

²³*Ibid.*, 9.

²⁴Howard H. Peckham, "Hoosier Authors: Who and Why," in *Indiana History: A Book of Readings*, ed. Ralph D. Gray (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 256.

Association of Indianapolis, the Indiana Ceramic Association, and the Sketching Club.²⁵

One year later, in 1905, a group of Arts and Crafts supporters established the Arts and Crafts Society of Indianapolis. The immediate impact of the Society on Indianapolis was great, and from the start the group received both public interest and support. Ironically, the club fell victim to its own success, and by 1907 it disbanded due to the opening of the John Herron Art Institute.

Indianapolis' art tradition developed slowly throughout the nineteenth century and lacked an influential group of wealthy patrons to lead it. As a result, artists themselves tended to encourage art appreciation among residents. By sponsoring their own art exhibits at various downtown locations, local artists eventually began to garner attention outside of the city by positive word of mouth.²⁶ In 1894 a group of four European-trained Indianapolis painters, T.C. Steele, J. Ottis Adams, William Forsyth, and Otto Stark, joined self-trained painter Richard Gruelle, also of Indianapolis, in a highly successful Chicago exhibit. Popular writer Hamlin Garland referred to these men as the "Hoosier Group," and they quickly became an "outpost of modernism in the heartland" and the pride of Indiana.²⁷ Their success in Chicago inspired an "awakening" of art in Indianapolis, according to one newspaper account.²⁸ These five painters took the lead in the city's art

²⁵*American Art Annual*, Volume IV: 1903-1904 (Washington, D.C.: The American Federation of Arts, 1904), 191.

²⁶Marion S. Garmel, "Visual Arts," in *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, eds. David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 209-211.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 211.

²⁸"The Hoosier Artists," *Indianapolis News*, 18 March 1898.

movement at the turn of the century by teaching art in the public schools, writing about art in the city's newspapers, and founding a number of local art clubs.

Perhaps Indianapolis' most influential art club in terms of size and scope was the Art Association of Indianapolis. Founded in 1883 by prominent teacher and feminist May Wright Sewall and seventeen other women, the Association's purpose was to educate the public about art, as well as to establish a museum.²⁹ The Art Association held annual art exhibits beginning in 1884, showcasing everything from paintings to pottery.³⁰ By 1898 the annual exhibit featured only works of Indiana artists, a feat which received much praise in the local press. The *Indianapolis Sentinel* declared that "no public-spirited citizen, nor art lover should fail to encourage Indiana artists and art patrons to keep up the exhibits of Indiana artists" if the state wished to keep its art on a "firm and recognized footing."³¹ The week long exhibit drew more than one thousand visitors, and the critics cited the works as proof that Indiana artists had finally achieved mastery over their materials.³² The presence of large art organizations like the Art Association opened the door for smaller, more specialized art clubs in Indianapolis, such as the Arts and Crafts Society of Indianapolis.

In 1900, John Herron bequeathed a staggering sum of \$225,000 to the Association, which it used to build a museum and an art school (later named the John

²⁹Garmel, "Visual Arts," 212.

³⁰Mary Q. Burnet, *Art and Artists of Indiana* (New York: The Century Co., 1921), 220.

³¹"Exhibit by Indiana Artists," *Indianapolis Sentinel*, 15 January 1898.

³²"Art Exhibit Opened," *Indianapolis Sentinel*, 16 January 1898.

Herron Art Institute). After the museum opened in 1906, the Art Association expanded its annual exhibits to include applied arts in an effort to “reach every class of citizen, that he might find encouragement there for bettering his work.”³³ Thus, despite the Association’s emphasis on aesthetics, an Arts and Crafts undertone pervaded its mission of moral uplift for the worker. With its public outreach and promotion of local artists, the Art Association quickly became the largest art club in the city, with three hundred members by 1903.³⁴

Non artists also furthered Indianapolis’ art tradition, most notably May Wright Sewall. Sewall defined the prototypical art club member and “new” woman. A nationally renowned feminist, Sewall founded the National and International Councils of Women, and served on a suffragists’ executive committee in 1888 with such luminaries as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.³⁵ Founder of and teacher for the Girls’ Classical School in Indianapolis, Sewall dedicated her life to improving the cultural organizations in Indianapolis. In her lifetime, Sewall helped form the Indianapolis Woman’s Club, the Indianapolis Propylaeum, the Contemporary Club, the Ramabai Circle (providing assistance to women in India), the Alliance Française, and most notably the Art Association of Indianapolis.³⁶

³³Burnet, *Art and Artists*, 224.

³⁴*American Art Annual, 1903-1904*, 191.

³⁵Lois W. Banner, *Women in Modern America* (Chicago: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), 2; Karen J. Blair, *The Torchbearers: Women and Their Amateur Arts Associations in America, 1890-1930* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 33.

³⁶Ray E. Boomhower, *“But I Do Clamor”: May Wright Sewall, A Life, 1844-1920* (Zionsville, IN: Guild Press of Indiana, 2001), 5.

The “new woman” reflected changing notions about female emancipation, in which women subtly challenged the status quo. Through dress reform, participation in athletic activities, working outside the home, and most notably, by joining clubs and associations, women began to exercise greater independence.³⁷ By their sheer numbers, these women were the driving force behind many Arts and Crafts clubs throughout the country.

Concerned for the welfare of their communities and having the free time to pursue their interests, clubs and organizations drew upper and middle class women into their ranks during the Progressive Era in numbers never before seen.³⁸ One historian estimates that in 1895 more than one hundred thousand women were involved in a club or organization.³⁹ Many clubs held lectures on art and beauty, which inspired some women to become “municipal housekeepers” by beautifying their neighborhoods.⁴⁰ Linked to the Progressive emphasis on healthy families and cleaner environments, women led the municipal housekeeping movement by sponsoring the conservation of green space and the building of municipal parks.

Additionally, some women desired self-improvement, and the result was a blossoming of art clubs throughout America in the period 1880 to 1920 to accommodate their interest.⁴¹ For some female members, art clubs functioned as a springboard for

³⁷Banner, *Women in Modern America*, 20, 49.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 87.

³⁹Blair, *The Torchbearers*, 30.

⁴⁰Banner, *Women in Modern America*, 95.

⁴¹Blair, *The Torchbearers*, 3.

feminist ideas through the creation of female support networks. Many suffragettes like Sewall used groups like the Art Association of Indianapolis to further their own feminist causes of suffrage and greater equality with men.⁴² But outside of broader feminist crusades, these groundbreaking art clubs gradually increased community interest and involvement in the arts through public exhibits, lectures, and the founding of art schools.⁴³ Arts and Crafts societies in America owe a great debt to women club members, for they tirelessly promoted the artistic merits of handicrafts. Club women latched onto handicrafts, which typically included needlework, china painting, pottery, weaving, and wood carving, as an accessible art form that they hoped would lead to greater appreciation of art by the general public.⁴⁴ Not only were handicrafts useful, they could provide economic relief to impoverished women as well as open career doors for the “new” woman. Handicrafts also fueled patriotism, because regional art forms fostered pride in city, state, and country. For these reasons, crafts found a natural ally in women.

While the male-dominated Arts and Crafts movement virtually barred women from the inner circles, women still found ways to participate as independent artists, teachers, or more frequently, as Arts and Crafts club members. As a result, women have been characterized as the movement’s most fervent adherents, providing huge financial support as consumers.⁴⁵ Despite their amateur status, the sheer number of women involved in the

⁴²Ibid., 6.

⁴³Ibid., 7.

⁴⁴Ibid., 84.

⁴⁵S.K. Tillyard, *The Impact of Modernism, 1900-1920* (New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, Inc., 1988), 6.

English and American movement as both producers and consumers meant that women were a driving force for the movement as a whole.

By the late nineteenth century, Arts and Crafts began to influence artists in Indianapolis. Historians consider the decade of the 1890s as Indianapolis' "renaissance" in the applied arts.⁴⁶ Growing awareness of the Arts and Crafts movement was evident in the various Art Association and Sketching Club exhibits on William Morris and Arts and Crafts designs.⁴⁷ But the movement found its greatest supporters in three important Indianapolis artists: Hoosier Group painter Richard Gruelle, fine arts publisher Joseph M. Bowles, and potter and designer Rembrandt (or Brandt) Steele.

Self-taught painter and illustrator Richard Gruelle moved to Indianapolis in 1882 and soon established himself in the community as a talented landscape artist. It was his association with the Hoosier Group, however, that identified him as a modern, groundbreaking artist of his day. His affinity for modern art kindled an interest in the Arts and Crafts movement and the decorative arts, even though he himself worked as a fine artist.

In 1893 Joseph Bowles published his first edition of *Modern Art*, a journal that quickly became one of the "most literate voices of the Arts and Crafts Movement."⁴⁸ Modeled after William Morris's Kelmscott Press, which revived the art of fine printing in

⁴⁶Garmel, "Visual Arts," 212.

⁴⁷Robert M. Taylor, Jr. and Barry Shifman, "Utility Embellished by Skilled Hands: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Indianapolis," *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* 6 (Winter 1994) : 6-7.

⁴⁸Gillian Naylor et al., *The Encyclopedia of Arts and Crafts* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1989), 134.

England, Bowles's *Modern Art* was arguably the best art journal in America, and Bowles is considered to have introduced the Arts and Crafts movement to Indianapolis.⁴⁹ Bowles printed articles about art trends written by T.C. Steele and Richard Gruelle, poetry by James Whitcomb Riley, and fiction by Meredith Nicholson. Famed designer Bruce Rogers' illustrations further enhanced the journal's credibility. By 1892 *Modern Art* had garnered an international following, and copies of the journal were available in major European cities.⁵⁰

A frequent contributor to *Modern Art* during its stint in Indianapolis was Rembrandt (Brandt) Steele, son of famed Hoosier Group painter T.C. Steele. After studying design in both Paris and Munich from 1894 to 1897, Steele returned to Indianapolis and opened a pottery studio. According to "Our Town" reporter Anton Scherrer, Steele "knew so much about modern design by the time he returned to Indianapolis that the world beat a path to his door."⁵¹ Steele's designs exhibited a variety of influences, but his pottery, stained glass, furniture, and homes were largely executed in the English and American Arts and Crafts style.

Brandt Steele also became a member of the Portfolio Club, which was founded in Indianapolis in 1895. Created to promote the ideas of William Morris and the Arts and

⁴⁹Jacob Piatt Dunn, "The Fine Arts," in *Greater Indianapolis: The History, the Industries, the Institutions, and the People of a City of Homes*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1910), I, 486; Barry Shifman, *Brandt Steele: Indianapolis Arts and Crafts Designer and Painter* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1994), 3.

⁵⁰Martin Krause, "Forums," *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* 3 (Summer 1991): 17.

⁵¹Anton Scherrer, "Our Town," *Indianapolis Times*, 16 July 1945.

Crafts movement, the club garnered a reputation as one of the most “hell-raising clubs” in Indianapolis history.⁵² Perhaps this reputation came from the club’s staunch support of art trends that were considered “radical” by traditionalists. The club’s mission statement was “to bring the various art interests of the community together and promote a spirit of art interest and appreciation.”⁵³ Typical lecture topics included “Some Modern English Decorative Art: An Exhibition and Description,” and “The New in Art.”⁵⁴

The outgrowth of this burgeoning interest in the applied arts culminated in the city’s first major Arts and Crafts exhibit held at Shortridge High School in 1898. Sponsored by the Citizens’ Education Society, a support organization for the Indianapolis public schools that was made up of local citizens, the first arts and crafts exhibit anticipated broad public involvement. Exhibit participants included schoolchildren from all grades, as well as professional artists such as Brandt Steele and the Hoosier Group painters, local manufacturers, architects, and decorators. Exhibits ranged from stained glass, murals, and wood carvings, to jewelry, embroidery, and porcelain.⁵⁵ The local press couched the exhibit’s educational value in Arts and Crafts terminology, declaring it an “exhibition of the democratic art--the art of utility, domestic art, art in the utensils of life,

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³“Portfolio Club Constitution,” William Forsyth Manuscript Collection, Manuscript and Visual Collections Department, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana

⁵⁴“Portfolio Club Program For Season 1897-1898,” William Forsyth Manuscript Collection, Manuscript and Visual Collections Department, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

⁵⁵“High School Art Exhibit,” *Indianapolis News*, 7 April 1898.

combined with and growing out of the artistic instinct,” in which the work of the artisans gave “a complete local expression” for the first time.⁵⁶ The exhibit inspired Richard Gruelle to declare in the local press, “It is not enough that our artists should paint beautiful pictures or carve beautiful statues. But I for one rejoice that I can find . . . men and women striving to make useful things that shall bring with them messages of beauty.”⁵⁷ For the *Shortridge High School Annual* for 1899, Gruelle loftily characterized the arts and crafts exhibit as marking “an epoch in the art life of Indianapolis,” and claimed that “[a]s a movement, nothing has occurred in our city’s history that is so far-reaching in its possible effect.”⁵⁸ Gruelle’s important cultural standing in the city undoubtedly intensified the movement’s local success.

Due to the success of the 1898 exhibit, Shortridge hosted a second arts and crafts exhibit for one week in April 1899. A new feature that year included artist demonstrations in an effort to represent various types of art, including a potter at his wheel and a rug maker weaving a Persian rug.⁵⁹ The local papers excitedly foreshadowed the event. The *Sentinel* predicted the artistic quality would be the city’s finest, and that after residents viewed the display the “arts and crafts movement will undoubtedly have the heartiest

⁵⁶“Fine Arts and Crafts,” *Indianapolis News*, 14 April 1898.

⁵⁷“The High School Exhibit,” *Indianapolis News*, 19 April 1898.

⁵⁸Richard Gruelle, “The Arts and Crafts,” *Shortridge High School 1899 Annual*, 33, Manuscript and Visual Collections Department, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

⁵⁹“Arts and Crafts Exhibit,” *Indianapolis News*, 6 April 1899.

sympathy and support of the citizens of Indianapolis.”⁶⁰ On opening night the governor delivered a short address expressing pride at the large number present and a German chorus of ninety singers performed. The exhibition opened to the Indianapolis public for an admission price of ten cents.⁶¹ In the school’s first floor corridors were paintings by Indiana artists and exhibits from local art stores. The second floor contained work by school children, and the smaller upstairs rooms held pieces made by amateur artists, which included most of the applied art displays.⁶² When the exhibit closed one week later, 25,000 citizens had visited the exhibit--roughly 15 percent of the city’s total population.⁶³

Like the 1898 show, the artistic quality of the 1899 exhibit garnered effusive praise. Leading the chorus was Dr. John S. Clark of Boston, a respected art educator, who came to Indianapolis to view the exhibit. He declared it to be “one of the most significant exhibitions we have had in this country,” and lauded the Citizens’ Education Society for “endeavoring to get the people through this exhibit to see what is being aimed at” in art education and appreciation.⁶⁴ Once again Richard Gruelle expressed his enthusiasm in language clearly inspired by the Arts and Crafts philosophy:

It can be plainly seen by any unbiased person that the aggregation of beauty and utility displayed in this exhibit means far more to the future art of our city than any other like movement yet started . . . any one can see here the gradual tendency of modern evolution. On such exhibits as this, so

⁶⁰“Arts and Crafts,” *Indianapolis Sentinel*, 13 April 1899.

⁶¹“Show of Arts and Crafts,” *Indianapolis News*, 15 April 1899.

⁶²“Arts and Crafts,” *Shorthridge Daily Echo*, 24 April 1899.

⁶³“Arts and Crafts,” *Indianapolis Sentinel*, 20 April 1899.

⁶⁴“Show of Arts and Crafts,” *Indianapolis News*, 15 April 1899.

democratic in its nature and purpose, rest much of the future of our art.⁶⁵

After lambasting the negative effects of industrialism, Gruelle continued his article by citing the exhibit as a model for joy in labor through the use of man's creative faculties.⁶⁶ Similarly, in another newspaper article written just two days later, Gruelle placed the exhibit squarely within the midwestern Arts and Crafts' tendency to embrace the machine as a form of democratic art. The machine-made piece affordable for the common classes, Gruelle argued, leads to the development of art appreciation, and thus to a higher standard of taste in this country.⁶⁷ Yet, improved taste was not enough for Gruelle, who linked higher artistic standards with greater personal freedom. He argued that by loosening the restrictions of "tradition and superstitions," and by encouraging the Arts and Crafts movement, Americans' full expression of themselves through their awakened artistic faculties would uplift the entire nation.⁶⁸

After the incredible success of the two arts and crafts exhibits, Indianapolis public schools art director Wilhelmena Seegmiller contributed an article entitled "The Arts and Crafts Movement in Indianapolis" for *Brush and Pencil*, an influential national Arts and Crafts magazine. In it, Seegmiller characterized Indianapolis as particularly receptive to art, in which the young and old participate in making or appreciating art. Due to the extensive support from teachers, students, citizens, and artists, the Arts and Crafts

⁶⁵Richard Gruelle, "Exhibit of Arts and Crafts," *Indianapolis News*, 17 April 1899.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

⁶⁷Richard Gruelle, "At Arts and Crafts Show," *Indianapolis News*, 19 April 1899.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*

movement arose in Indianapolis. The natural next step, wrote Seegmiller, was to sponsor public exhibits of the arts and crafts to show local residents the beautiful utility of this art genre.⁶⁹ Slowly but surely, the Indianapolis Arts and Crafts movement was influencing not just artists, but also the average citizen, a trend that would allow for the city's own Arts and Crafts club.

By 1900, *House Beautiful* magazine, an important fount for arbiters of taste in America, declared that the American Arts and Crafts movement had passed its dilettante phase and its influence had become widespread.⁷⁰ Additionally, the artisans' quality of work had increased so much in the past decade that *House Beautiful* advocated the opening of arts and crafts shops throughout the nation to compete with mass-produced goods. The exponential growth of applied artisans across America led the Bureau of Labor to issue a special report entitled "Revival of Handicrafts in America," in which the bureau evaluated states and cities in terms of handicraft output. The Bureau of Labor characterized Indiana as a center for ceramic arts, citing the existence of the Ceramic Association that was organized in 1897. Additionally, the report mentioned the two arts and crafts exhibitions as notable artistic activity.⁷¹ Local newspapers followed Arts and Crafts as the latest art trend, which also educated the general public about the style. In October 1905, the *Indianapolis Star* ran a feature article on page one of the "Woman's

⁶⁹Wilhelmena Seegmiller, "The Arts and Crafts Movement in Indianapolis," *Brush and Pencil: An Illustrated Magazine of the Arts and Crafts* IV (April-September 1899) : 217-18.

⁷⁰"A Permanent Exhibit of Arts and Crafts," *House Beautiful* 13 (March 1903) : 263.

⁷¹*Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor*, no. 55, *Revival of Handicrafts in America* (Washington, D.C. : Government Printing Office, 1904), 1610.

Section” entitled “The Arts and Crafts Raised to High Arts,” in which the reporter declared that Arts and Crafts had finally received the consideration it deserved.⁷²

The culmination of the city’s Arts and Crafts movement was the founding of the Arts and Crafts Society of Indianapolis in June 1905. Begun as an outgrowth of all the artistic activities of the 1890s, the club’s charter members included architects, art teachers, professional artists, businessmen, and prominent wives. Hoosier Group painters T.C. Steele, John Ottis Adams, and William Forsyth took active roles in the club, as well as Brandt Steele and Arts and Crafts potter and Shortridge art teacher Roda Selleck.⁷³ The Society’s purpose was to sell merchandise through “mercantile operations including articles, in all branches of handicrafts, of special artistic merit and excellence in design and workmanship.”⁷⁴ The local press welcomed such an organization by saying that it filled “a need in this city of a place where artistic handwork may be seen and bought.”⁷⁵

Thus, the Indianapolis club, like most Arts and Crafts clubs of its era, chose to focus on the aesthetic rather than political elements of the movement. However, unlike the Society of Arts and Crafts in Boston, the Indianapolis members eschewed membership criteria based on artistic ability in favor of a more accessible club that was open to “anyone

⁷²“The Arts and Crafts Raised to High Arts,” *Indianapolis Star*, 15 October 1905.

⁷³Surprisingly, Richard Gruelle was not a charter member of the club.

⁷⁴Robert M. Taylor, Jr., “‘Some Special Object’: The Arts and Crafts Society of Indianapolis,” *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* 6 (Winter 1994) : 24.

⁷⁵“Society of Crafts and Arts to Open Salesroom,” *Indianapolis News*, 14 June 1905.

interested in the decorative arts.”⁷⁶ Thus, the Arts and Crafts Society of Indianapolis neither aligned itself with greater social causes like Chicago’s club, nor precluded the average citizen from membership like the SACB. Reflecting their overriding interest in aesthetics as well as their interest in a more “democratic” organization, the Indianapolis Society chose to forge its own path. It was this regional individualism that characterized the American Arts and Crafts movement overall.

Five months after incorporating, in November 1905, the Society followed Boston’s model by opening a sales room at its headquarters located at 21 East Ohio Street. Referred to as the “permanent exhibition,” the items for sale included products from every handicraft, such as stained glass, pottery, metal work, jewelry, decorative painting, photography, furniture, bookbinding, wood carving, and textiles.⁷⁷ The exhibits included local as well as national artisans, and everything had to pass a jury review. Brandt Steele designed the sales room’s interior, and on opening night Mrs. Charles W. Fairbanks and Mrs. Benjamin Harrison acted as hostesses and welcomed visitors.⁷⁸ The newspapers waxed ecstatic about the opening, declaring that the sales room was “expected to make this building the center for craftsmen not only of the city and State, but of all parts of the world.”⁷⁹ The *Indianapolis Star* wrote that the sales room “proved a revelation to the

⁷⁶Taylor, ““Some Special Object,”” 24; “Arts and Crafts,” *Shorthridge Daily Echo*, 22 November 1905.

⁷⁷Florence Levy, ed., *American Art Annual*, Volume V: 1905-1906 (New York: American Art Annual, 1905), 186.

⁷⁸Taylor, ““Some Special Object,”” 24.

⁷⁹“Display of the Arts and Crafts Society,” *Indianapolis News*, 21 November 1905.

many visitors who thronged the beautiful rooms all day.”⁸⁰ Reflecting the city’s unique level of student involvement in the arts, the *Shortridge Daily Echo* encouraged high school students to patronize the exhibition, declaring that the Arts and Crafts presence in the city was “a great step for Indianapolis.”⁸¹ Besides the sales shop, the Society began a series of lectures on the philosophical aspects of the Arts and Crafts movement in February 1906, with topics ranging from the philosophy of William Morris to practical advice on construction techniques.⁸²

April 1906 marked a high point for the Society when it added a tea room to service shoppers and its sales room sponsored a new exhibit of art pottery, including pieces from nationally known firms Markham, Grueby, Teco, and Webb.⁸³ According to local reporters, the artistic quality shown at the sales room rivaled similar shops in New York, Chicago, and St. Louis, and in terms of choice and execution, the Indianapolis shop was “far in advance of shops elsewhere.”⁸⁴ By 1906, the shop merchandise’s total estimated worth was roughly \$800, with some pieces being sold for as high as \$30.⁸⁵ The issue of high prices was a dilemma which mired the entire Arts and Crafts movement from England to America, as the cost of pieces often precluded the middle classes from

⁸⁰“Many Artists At Society’s Opening,” *Indianapolis Star*, 22 November 1905.

⁸¹“Arts and Crafts,” *Shortridge Daily Echo*, 22 November 1905.

⁸²Taylor, ““Some Special Object,”” 26.

⁸³“Works for Interest of Arts and Crafts,” *Indianapolis Star*, 1 April 1906.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*

⁸⁵*Ibid.*

affording them. It appears that Indianapolis, though claiming to want a more democratic art club, fell prey to the same issues that afflicted all Arts and Crafts societies.

By July of 1906, the newspapers reported that, due to the enormous success of the sales room, the store would be closed until next fall to restock its supply. Since November more than 700 pieces had been sold, and the Society's revenue had increased every month since it opened. Even the tea room had become self-supporting after its second month of operation.⁸⁶ Due to its financial solvency, the Society anticipated expanding to include an interior design service.

The future of the Arts and Crafts Society of Indianapolis seemed very promising. Yet, within little more than a year, the Society folded. By October 1906 the Indianapolis Social Institute took over the rooms at 21 East Ohio Street, as the shop failed to reopen in the fall.⁸⁷ This incongruity can be explained by two factors that negatively impacted the club's survival. The first explanation concerned high prices and competition. The Arts and Crafts movement could never adequately address the inherent flaw in its desire to sell merchandise to the middle classes at prices out of their financial reach. In an era when five pounds of sugar cost less than a quarter, and a man's wool suit cost a little more than twenty dollars, the purchase of a thirty dollar ceramic vase seemed both extravagant and foolhardy.

Compounded with this was competition from department stores that could sell their art wares for significantly less. Indianapolis was no exception. In October 1905, the

⁸⁶"Arts and Crafts Shop Plans," *Indianapolis News*, 31 July 1906.

⁸⁷Taylor, "'Some Special Object,'" 27.

new L.S. Ayres department store opened with an art gallery on the fourth floor.⁸⁸ The popularity of the Arts and Crafts pieces in the gallery, which included original and machine-made items, proved to be a windfall for Ayres, but sealed the fate of the higher-priced Arts and Crafts salesroom.

The second element that hurt the Arts and Crafts Society was the opening of the new John Herron Art Institute in November 1906. The school attracted the city's artists, hiring them as teachers and exhibiting their works. It also provided an outlet for lectures and forums. On its gala opening night, guest speaker Frederick L. Whiting from the Arts and Crafts Society of Boston delivered a speech entitled, "The Development and Meaning of the Arts and Crafts Movement," signifying the Institute's support for and identification with the movement.⁸⁹ Keynote speaker Halsey C. Ives of Washington University in St. Louis used Arts and Crafts rhetoric when he praised the new art school for its dedication to the "practical side of art rather than the esthetic side," and for its ability to teach the city's laborers "artistic feeling, which will enable them to do their work better."⁹⁰ The opening of the Art Institute signaled the shift of Arts and Crafts ideas from outsider status to mainstream.

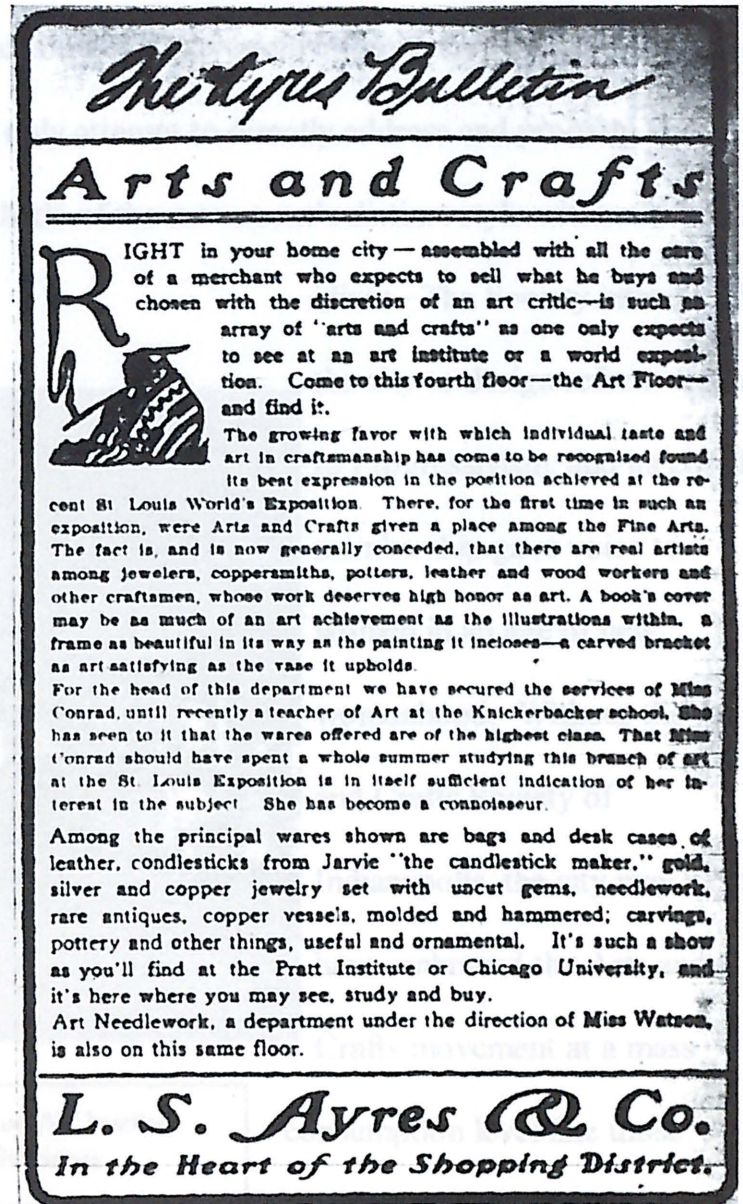
⁸⁸"New Store in Gala Attire for Guests," *Indianapolis Morning Star*, 3 October 1905.

⁸⁹"Opening Night of the Art Institute," *Indianapolis News*, 20 November 1906.

⁹⁰"Art for the Masses Halsey C. Ives's Idea," *Indianapolis News*, 20 November 1906.

With faculty that included Brandt Steele teaching decorative arts and Roda Selleck instructing pottery classes, the Herron Art Institute aligned itself with the aesthetic side of the Arts and Crafts movement.

Annual exhibitions of the Herron Art Institute included installments of "applied arts," illustrating the impact of Arts and Crafts, in which local artisans exhibited bookplates, stained glass, jewelry, pottery, ceramic tile, and furniture. The Institute even sponsored an entire exhibition on decorative arts, in which three hundred items were displayed.⁹¹ Having a professional institution within the city to help spread the Arts and Crafts ideology lessened the need for an auxiliary organization. As a result, the Arts and Crafts Society of Indianapolis was a victim of its own success: in



The Times Bulletin

Arts and Crafts

RIGHT in your home city — assembled with all the care of a merchant who expects to sell what he buys and chosen with the discretion of an art critic—is such an array of "arts and crafts" as one only expects to see at an art institute or a world exposition. Come to this fourth floor—the Art Floor—and find it.

The growing favor with which individual taste and art in craftsmanship has come to be recognized found its best expression in the position achieved at the recent St. Louis World's Exposition. There, for the first time in such an exposition, were Arts and Crafts given a place among the Fine Arts. The fact is, and is now generally conceded, that there are real artists among jewelers, coppermiths, potters, leather and wood workers and other craftsmen, whose work deserves high honor as art. A book's cover may be as much of an art achievement as the illustrations within, a frame as beautiful in its way as the painting it incloses—a carved bracket as art satisfying as the vase it upholds.

For the head of this department we have secured the services of Miss Conrad, until recently a teacher of Art at the Knickerbocker school. She has seen to it that the wares offered are of the highest class. That Miss Conrad should have spent a whole summer studying this branch of art at the St. Louis Exposition is in itself sufficient indication of her interest in the subject. She has become a connoisseur.

Among the principal wares shown are bags and desk cases of leather, candlesticks from Jarvie "the candlestick maker," gold, silver and copper jewelry set with uncut gems, needlework, rare antiques, copper vessels, molded and hammered; carvings, pottery and other things, useful and ornamental. It's such a show as you'll find at the Pratt Institute or Chicago University, and it's here where you may see, study and buy.

Art Needlework, a department under the direction of Miss Watson, is also on this same floor.

L. S. Ayres & Co.
In the Heart of the Shopping District.

Fig. 1--Typical newspaper advertisement of Arts and Crafts pieces for sale at L.S. Ayres.

⁹¹"An Exhibition of Decorative Art," *Bulletin of the John Herron Art Institute*, circa 1910.

educating the public about the value of handcrafted goods, it helped to legitimize the teaching of applied arts at Herron.⁹²

The Arts and Crafts Society of Indianapolis existed for only eighteen months, and when examined outside of its historic context it may seem insignificant. But the organization represents the first and only attempt to directly address and promote the ideas of William Morris and the aesthetic of the movement's distinct style within the local



Fig. 2--Exhibit at the John Herron Art Institute displaying Arts and Crafts pieces

idiom. The Society introduced the city to design reform central to Progressivism, and its co-ed membership gave voice to women in an age of new womanhood. Without the Arts and Crafts Society of Indianapolis, the city may never have embraced the Arts and Crafts movement at a mass consumption level like those provided by department stores such as L.S. Ayres. Lastly, and perhaps most important, the Society promoted the artistic credibility of handicrafts, which later facilitated the John Herron Art Institute's implementation of an applied arts department.

⁹²Taylor, "Some Special Object," 27.

In addition to these accomplishments, the Arts and Crafts Society of Indianapolis left behind a legacy of beautiful and useful everyday objects. The city's cultural institutions still celebrate the skill and vision of its local artists, from Janet Payne Bowles's metalwork to stained glass designed by Brandt Steele, in the form of exhibits, lectures, and books. So, while short-lived, the ideas advocated by the Society continued to have an impact on the city's art tradition long after it had disappeared.

Schools are cultural institutions that have been and are becoming a force in large, in Progressive Era America, in which change came to be regarded as all pervasive, schools faced a rapid series of reforms from within and without. The curriculum, and, in most cases permanently, altered the composition of the growing population and rampant child anti-labor laws meant to encourage child labor, particularly in the secondary grades. Between 1900 and 1910 the number of high school graduates in the United States, from roughly 5 percent of the total population to 16 percent, as citizens held schools responsible for the "Americanization" of the young, as well as upholding social order. As the public felt an increasing responsibility for the American educational system, the country's first federal education law, the *Keatinge Act*, inspired by University of Chicago president William D. Howe's emphasis on "individualized learning and 'learning by doing,'" responded by mandating the federal government's curriculum to include practical education, from manual training to civics, science, art, and manual training.

¹Harry Wood, "The Extension of Art and Manual Training to High Schools," 1910, Harry E. Wood Collection, Manuscripts and Special Collections Department, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Peabody Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

²John Whitecay Chambers II, *The Tyranny of Change: America in the Progressive Era, 1900-1917* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 9.

CHAPTER III: School Reform and Arts and Crafts

That is the very thing so much needed in our schools today – to teach boys and girls that their hands should be well trained servants of their minds and that the eye must be alert to see the beauty it is possible to put into the plainest things, simply by keeping in mind their usefulness first of all.¹

Schools are cultural barometers that both reflect and react to society at large. In Progressive Era America, in which change seemed the solution to all problems, schools faced a rapid series of reforms from within and without that dramatically and, in most cases permanently, altered the educational system. A growing populace and stringent child anti-labor laws meant an increased number of pupils, particularly in the secondary grades. Between 1900 and 1920, the number of high school graduates tripled in America, from roughly 5 percent to about 16 percent.² Moreover, citizens held schools responsible for the “Americanization” of working-class immigrants, as well as upholding social order. As the public felt its vested interests tied to the success of the American educational system, the country became fixated on school reform. Educators, inspired by University of Chicago philosopher John Dewey’s emphasis on individualized teaching and “learning by doing,” responded by expanding the traditional “three R’s” curriculum to include practical education. New classes in music, physical education, art, and manual training

¹Harry Wood, “The Correlation of Art and Manual Training in High Schools,” 1910, Harry E. Wood Collection, Manuscript and Visual Collections Department, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

²John Whiteclay Chambers II, *The Tyranny of Change: America in the Progressive Era, 1900-1917* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1980), 9.

literally revolutionized teaching; what was once rote memorization became relevant and practical.

Coinciding with this overhaul in education was the American Arts and Crafts movement, which emphasized the practical as beautiful, the functional as moral. As wed to modern ideas as Progressives were, yet inextricably bound to white, middle-class tradition, Arts and Crafts ideology fit into the new curricula perfectly. The result of the harmonious union was the systematic propagation of the Arts and Crafts gospel in ways that William Morris could only have imagined. Truly the Arts and Crafts movement's most potent effects on industrial production can be linked directly to the schools.

In Indianapolis, compared to other cities, this new trend in education caught on particularly well. Led by innovative Indianapolis public school art director Wilhemina Seegmiller, art teachers trained in the "New Education" theories of John Dewey and adherents of the Arts and Crafts style found a hospitable environment in the city. At Indianapolis' two high schools, Shortridge and Emmerich Manual Training, students learned from professionally trained art instructors who lent a respectability to these courses for the first time. At Shortridge, classes taught by Roda Selleck and Janet Payne Bowles emphasized the practical arts over fine arts, and students learned pottery, art metal and jewelry design, weaving, and stenciling. Harry Wood, instructor at Manual High School, taught his students furniture making, metalsmithing, stained glass design, and leather tooling. While not the only art teachers at these schools, they led their departments' curricula and set the tone for all course work. Believers that education should be practical, and that practical goods should be beautiful, these instructors

combined Progressive education with the Arts and Crafts movement, and indoctrinated a generation of students in the process.

According to historian Laurence A. Cremin, the goals of Progressive educators were fourfold: to make schools the heart of a community; to divorce politics from education; to make schools more modern through the use of “scientific” schooling; and lastly, to increase practical knowledge through the introduction of vocational courses.³ Schools developed programs that focused on the social and economic needs of their communities, and became a source of local pride in neighborhoods.

Manual training classes trace their roots back to Moscow under instructor Victor Della Vos, director of Moscow’s Imperial Technical High School. Della Vos’s students exhibited their wares at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, a move that sent shock waves through American industry. The skill and technical expertise displayed by the Russian students threatened to challenge the aptitude of American factory workers whom often lacked formal training. The idea of training high school students in practical skills was quickly embraced by American business as a way to deal with this threat of competition. Introducing students to good design, they believed, would inspire them to make superior American products. Businessmen looked to vocational training in terms of training future workers, but also as a way to teach the next generation about the nature of

³Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Metropolitan Experience, 1876-1980* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 223.

the industrial society they would inherit. They believed that training in vocational arts would “inculcate the right habits and attitudes toward work.”⁴

Meanwhile, philosopher John Dewey argued for reform from the instructor’s viewpoint. In his 1900 treatise, *The School and Society*, Dewey lambasted contemporary pedagogy as “education dominated almost entirely by the mediaeval conception of learning,” in which educators divorced theory from practice.⁵ In the modern age of industrialization, efficiency, and urbanization, Dewey wrote, education must also evolve if it is to remain effective: “It is radical conditions which have changed, and only an equally radical change in education suffices,” which he termed “New Education.”⁶ Dewey wanted to retain the traditional curriculum, but add practical classes that would both teach skills and build personal character through achievement and team work. *The School and Society* was hugely influential when published, and it became Dewey’s most widely read book. It was so popular, in fact, that publishers translated it into multiple languages.⁷

Dewey’s lectures and works sparked the nation’s interest in school reform. Suddenly, magazines and newspapers carried articles posing queries like “What are the

⁴Wendy Kaplan, “Spreading the Crafts: The Role of the Schools,” in *The Art that is Life: The Arts & Crafts Movement in America, 1875-1920*, ed. Wendy Kaplan (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1987), 301.

⁵John Dewey, *The School and Society*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1915), 25.

⁶*Ibid.*, 9.

⁷Cremin, *American Education*, 169.

public schools doing to train the rising generation to be useful citizens?”⁸ The school took center stage in the struggle for positive reform, with various factions trying to push their own agendas.

Historians Raymond E. Callahan and T.J. Jackson Lears argue that no matter how idealistic these reformers appeared, the true impetus for change was commandeered by and for business. The ulterior motive for manual training classes, Callahan states, was to supplant the need for costly apprenticeships paid for by business and transfer the burden and expense of training future workers to the schools.⁹ Additionally, many students from working class or immigrant families found themselves directed to manual high schools that reinforced their social status and limited their future career choices. Traditional intellectual studies gave way to the training of mechanics and factory workers, according to Callahan, at the expense of a liberal education.

Similarly, Lears criticizes the “accommodationist” sentiment the public held toward instituting manual training courses as a way of pigeonholing the working classes. Dewey’s “New Education” was just another way of assimilating immigrants and taming rebellious workers.¹⁰ According to Lears, reformers looked to vocational education as a way to remind the lower classes about their station in life by teaching them to value

⁸Florence N. Levy, “Craft Classes in the Public Schools,” *The International Studio*, 35 (October 1908) : 71.

⁹Raymond E. Callahan, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 14.

¹⁰T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon, 1981), 78.

manual labor.¹¹ True, the introduction of the vocational high school emerged during this period, which encouraged different educational tracks that largely divided along class lines. Even within comprehensive high schools vocational tracks attracted lower social classes. Yet this differentiation also was due in part to the beginning of standardized tests meant to tailor education to the abilities of a variety of students. Despite these conceptions, though, the appeal of vocational training nevertheless grew among students from all backgrounds.

No matter what the ulterior motives, the introduction of manual training classes in the United States became widespread in elementary and secondary schools by 1900.

Advocates like Dewey took pointed interest in such courses, and he looked to shop and home arts classes in both immediate and future terms: they created more helpful children at home, and they prepared students in practical knowledge that would help them later in life. Ideally, Dewey argued, “hands-on” courses that stressed teamwork and cooperation would be the most valuable skill taught to students in the modern era.

As understood by advocates of the Arts and Crafts movement, manual training offered a unique opportunity to mold the tastes of future producers and consumers of art. In an era of mass communication, where the coveted role of tastemaker seemed up for grabs among various media outlets, Arts and Crafts proponents looked to vocational training in the school as a way to shape properly the tastes of the future. Manual classes such as furniture making, metalwork, woodworking, and design, coupled with practical art

¹¹Ibid., 81.

classes such as pottery, weaving, jewelry making, and sewing, taught both genders the value of the useful and the beautiful, a basic Arts and Crafts credo.

Gustav Stickley came out in favor of manual training in his publication *The Craftsman*, and placed it squarely within the goals of the Arts and Crafts movement.¹² In the January 1903 edition, Stickley published an article written by University of Chicago professor Oscar Lovell Triggs called “A School of Industrial Art,” in which Triggs described the ideal curriculum. A Morris supporter, proclaimed Socialist, and leader of the Chicago Arts and Crafts movement, Triggs wrote that modern schools should be a place where “nothing useless is taught,” and it should bring “art and labor into necessary association – labor to give substance, art to yield pleasure.”¹³ Triggs’s argument held that if educators could inculcate their students with the value of industry as well as art, then the nature of labor would change to allow creativity and individuality, and thus pleasure. To accomplish this, Triggs lays out a tentative curriculum that begins with the study of design. Older students would proceed with manual training classes that include work in “wood, metal, leather, stone, glass, the earths, paper and textiles.”¹⁴ Only when schools begin to incorporate such course work, Triggs concludes, will the needs of a modern industrial democracy be met.

¹²Eileen Boris, *Art and Labor: Ruskin, Morris, and the Craftsman Ideal in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 90.

¹³Oscar Lovell Triggs, “A School of Industrial Art,” *The Craftsman* (January 1903) : 216, 218.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 221.

Like Triggs, other Arts and Crafts followers encouraged educators to teach students the value of joy in one's work in the face of highly specialized and repetitive factory jobs. Citing English art critic John Ruskin, they pointed to the moral lessons inherent in hand-craftsmanship as further argument. In a speech delivered before a conference of school superintendents, R. Charles Bates posed the suggestion "Possibilities of Manual Training for Moral Ends," in which he quotes Ruskin: "A boy cannot learn to make a straight shaving or drive a fine curve without learning a multitude of other matters which the life of man could not teach him."¹⁵ Ultimately they believed that, if taught before they entered the workforce, these students may carry out Morris's call for dignity in labor one day.

One of the most successful implementations of manual training occurred in Gary, Indiana. Between 1907 and 1938, school superintendent William Wirt devised a public school curriculum that integrated work and play in an efficient, bureaucratic system. Called the Gary Plan, Wirt's goal of integrating Gary's swelling immigrant population became a sensation among Progressive educators as the school of tomorrow. Wirt enriched the curriculum with non-traditional course work such as music, art, and science, built playgrounds and gymnasiums, added evening programs for adults, and allowed neighborhood groups to utilize school assemblies for meetings and lectures. In short, Gary schools positioned themselves at the center of community life. John Dewey frequently cited and praised the Gary Plan in his lectures, and other cities attempted to

¹⁵R. Charles Bates, "Possibilities of Manual Training for Moral Ends," *Manual Training Magazine*, II (April 1901) : 169.

copy the plan, with mixed results.¹⁶ Gary was an inspiration to Progressive educators across the country, including a number in Indianapolis.

The evolution of education in Indianapolis mirrored most metropolitan school corporations. Beginning in the 1880s, city school superintendents spoke in favor of curriculum expansion, often citing Dewey and other philosophers, as a way to decrease truancy, engage students, and train them in practical skills. Before the 1880s, Indianapolis schools favored rote memorization of traditional learning. During this decade, however, elementary students began classes in art and music. Their work was so encouraging that educators lobbied school boards to offer such classes to the higher grades.¹⁷

At this time only one high school serviced the city's older students, known initially as Indianapolis High School, but eventually renamed Shortridge High School. Located on the corner of Michigan Street and Pennsylvania Avenue from 1872 until 1928, Indianapolis's first high school occupied a number of locations previous to this site.¹⁸ In 1928 Shortridge relocated once more to 34th Street between Meridian and Pennsylvania, where the building remains today. In 1895 a second high school opened on the city's south side that was eventually called Emmerich Manual High School, so named for its emphasis on vocational training. It was these two schools, through the actions of

¹⁶Boris, *Art and Labor*, 88.

¹⁷William J. Reese, "Education," in *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, eds. David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 76.

¹⁸"Miracle on 34th Street," *Indianapolis Monthly* (September 1984) : 94.

educators and students alike, that would become the largest influence on Indianapolis's Arts and Crafts movement.

In 1883 school officials tested public interest in manual training courses by offering summer school classes at the high school. They hired an outside professional to teach, and the courses continued again the next summer. In 1884 or 1885, Superintendent H.S. Tarbell traveled to New York and Philadelphia to observe manual training courses in their high schools. Upon his return he issued a report to the school board suggesting the inclusion of "mechanical drawing, designing, clay modeling, carpentry, woodcarving, wood turning and pattern making" courses open to both sexes.¹⁹

Finally, in the 1888 Annual Superintendent's Report, a separate report of manual training detailed the desire to begin such a course in the upper grades. Superintendent Tarbell argued once again for its inclusion into the curriculum, and requested \$1,000 for necessary tools and materials from the school board. The board granted his request, and one course in manual training began at Shortridge High School.²⁰ A basement room was converted into a shop to accommodate the new course work. According to the

¹⁹Harry E. Wood, "History of Art, Practical Arts and Vocational Education in the Indianapolis Public Schools," 1950, p.12. Harry E. Wood Collection, Manuscript and Visual Collections Department, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

²⁰"Superintendent's Report," *27th Annual Report of the Public Schools of the City of Indianapolis, for school year ending June 30, 1888* (Indianapolis, 1888), 67.

Shortridge principal's annual report for 1888, seventy boys and three girls enrolled in the course, and he strongly recommended the addition of more such courses.²¹

The school board agreed, and in the ensuing years they purchased engines, lathes, tools, work benches, and even a printing press for the student body. But more than the physical setting, school officials seemed very excited about this new venture:

The year's work in the Manual Training Department of the High School has been more successful in every way than we had even hoped . . . The work in this department has been placed upon the same general footing as other elective studies, and the same credit has been given for it as for any other study.²²

By the end of the 1889 school year seventy-five high school boys and girls had taken a manual training course, higher than anticipated. The next task for officials was to increase the curriculum even more to meet the need. Woodworking and metal work classes were added.

Beginning in 1891, the Committee on Manual Training reported the need for an additional high school to service the south side of the city, as well as to provide a comprehensive manual training curriculum.²³ Three years later in 1894, the Industrial Training School opened just south of South Street near Madison Avenue. While providing traditional course work, the new school emphasized manual training. Classes included shop work, forging, drawing, and wood carving, as well as sewing and cooking.

²¹"Report of Principal of High School No. 1," *28th Annual Report of the Public Schools of the City of Indianapolis, for school year ending June 30, 1889* (Indianapolis, 1889), 83.

²²Wood, "History of Art," 13.

²³*Ibid.*, 19.

In 1899 the school changed its name to Manual Training High School, and again in 1916 to Emmerich Manual Training High School in honor of its first principal, Charles Emmerich.

By 1902, manual training in the arts and crafts was flourishing in both high schools, as evidenced in the annual report. They attracted more students than space available, and Manual had to hire an extra art teacher as well as add a third classroom.



Fig. 1--Arts and Crafts style textiles and pottery made by art students at Shortridge.

The director of art education finished her report by requesting more funding and the hiring of two more teachers, as well as consideration by the board to increase classroom space in the future.²⁴ Similarly, the supervisor of manual training stated in his report the need for greater funding and more work space.²⁵

The students spoke proudly of their efforts in these classes, as well. In Shortridge's student newspaper, the *Daily Echo*, and its yearbooks, the

students made numerous mentions of their work in manual arts. In an article titled "Arts and Crafts" in the 1906 yearbook, student Marie Stewart states, "This movement has found its way into manual training work of our public schools, both in the grades and in the high schools . . . Our own Shortridge High school is doing its share of the art craft

²⁴Wilhemina Seegmiller, "Drawing, or Art Instruction," *Indianapolis Public Schools' Annual Report for 1902* (Indianapolis, 1902), 72-3.

²⁵Ibid., 80.

work.” She lists pieces made by art students that year which include pottery, bookbinding, weaving of rugs, leather tooling, copper lanterns, stenciling and wood-block printing. All of these articles were made, she says, with the understanding that “the influence that unites the workers in such a manner as to form the necessary links that are essential to the production of articles useful and beautiful” is alive at Shortridge.²⁶

Aware of the growing trend in manual training, the *Indianapolis Star* in 1906 wrote an article praising local schools for their foresight, asserting “Manual training in the Indianapolis schools has ceased to be an experiment, and no criticism is likely to be made of the gradual extension of the system determined on by the board.” The *Star* supported manual training for both girls and boys in all grade levels, citing the Arts and Crafts notion of beauty in everyday things: “To be allowed to make with their own hands articles of practical use had the effect of stirring the mental facilities in a general way and creating an interest in other directions.”²⁷ The article reflected the public’s sentiment when it editorialized that manual training is a worthy addition to the curriculum that deserved to stay.

In 1915 John Dewey and his daughter Evelyn published *Schools of Tomorrow*, in which they showcased progressive schools across America as examples of the successful implementation of his theories. The work mentioned Indianapolis public schools numerous times for their efforts incorporating “learning by doing” courses. He cited a fifth grade shop class that constructed a model bungalow out of wood that was decorated

²⁶Marie Stewart, “Arts and Crafts,” *Shortridge High School Annual*, 1906, n.p.

²⁷“Manual Training in the Schools,” *Indianapolis Star*, 11 September 1906.

and furnished by art students in an Arts and Crafts theme.²⁸ In another instance he praised the seventh and eighth grades for planning and caring for a large garden. In both cases, the students were keen that the projects should incorporate beauty and practicality.

By 1910, just a little more than two decades after being introduced to the secondary schools, manual training classes became part of the status quo. In the 1908-09 annual report of the Indianapolis public schools the superintendent wrote, "It is taken for granted that it is not necessary to restate the argument for manual training."²⁹ When justifying the high costs, he argued, "This manual training is worth, I believe, all and more than it costs. This kind of training is a necessity for city pupils, and not a luxury."³⁰ He went on to make a case for a closer intimacy between the shop and art classes in an effort to make the useful beautiful: "Its utility is not lessened because it is beautiful. This principle of the unity of the useful and the aesthetic is finding increased recognition in our practice."³¹ The unity of the two is a direct influence of the Arts and Crafts philosophy.

No discussion of the connection between the schools and the city's Arts and Crafts movement would be complete without an examination of the educators who facilitated the process. In many instances they were trained professional artists first, and teachers second. At Shortridge this roster included Roda Selleck, high school art teacher, and her

²⁸John Dewey and Evelyn Dewey, *Schools of Tomorrow*, 3rd ed. (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1962), 56-7.

²⁹"What the Schools are Attempting To Do," *Indianapolis Public Schools' Annual Report for 1908-09* (Indianapolis, 1910), 48.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹*Ibid.*, 49.

successor Janet Payne Bowles. Also of note was Charity Dye, a Shortridge English teacher, who was not an artist but made the writings of William Morris required reading. Upon its opening Manual had distinguished Hoosier Group painter Otto Stark on staff in the manual arts department, but the shop teacher who left the most pronounced legacy there was trained artist Harry E. Wood. At the helm of these gifted teachers was Wilhemina Seegmiller, who served during this period as art director of the Indianapolis public school system.

Born in 1866 in Ontario, Canada, Wilhemina Seegmiller attended the School of Fine and Applied Art at Brooklyn's prestigious Pratt Institute.³² After working in various public schools in Michigan and Pennsylvania, Seegmiller became director of art instruction for the Indianapolis public schools in 1895, a post she held until her untimely death in 1913. Through her belief that art should include both the fine and practical, Seegmiller set the stage for the change in the arts curriculum in the public schools. She spearheaded the effort of hiring professional artists as teachers, and she cultivated relationships between the schools and local artists.³³

In 1898, Seegmiller initiated contact with Hoosier Group painters by soliciting them to donate portraits to the public schools.³⁴ This idea was popular across the country at the time, with the belief that schools should be home like and the art should be patriotic

³²"Wilhemina Seegmiller, 1866-1913," *The School Arts Magazine*, XIII (September 1913) : 13.

³³Marion S. Garmel, "Visual Arts," in *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, eds. David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 212.

³⁴"School-Room Decoration," *Indianapolis News*, 12 April 1898.

or uplifting. Along with the Citizens Educational Society, Seegmiller successfully garnered a number of art pieces that today value in the millions for the Indianapolis public schools. The city's newspapers followed the initiative, and quoted Seegmiller as saying, "the art movement in the public schools of the city is growing" and that the problems of labor will be solved in the future by the "artistic training of children."³⁵ Her emphasis on the moral uplift of beauty is purely Ruskin, and the link between art and labor could have come from the mouth of Morris.

Seegmiller also published a number of books to be used in the classroom. The most successful of these were the *Applied Arts Drawing Books*, a series of eight books that became a staple in art classes across the country. Upon publication in 1914 more than one million copies sold in six months' time.³⁶

Very quickly Seegmiller's reputation as an innovator and organizer became known throughout the country. In 1908 she was asked to represent the United States at the International Congress of Art Educators and Manual Training Teachers held in London, one of only four persons in the country asked to attend.³⁷ She declined due to other engagements, much to the dismay of the delegation. Seegmiller was a frequent contributor to *The School Arts Magazine* and other educational and art journals, usually writing about the Indianapolis art programs. In the March 1905 edition of *The School Arts Book*, Seegmiller gave examples of art projects assigned to the primary grades, such

³⁵"Pictures For the Children," *Indianapolis News*, 20 January 1898.

³⁶Mary Q. Burnet, *Art and Artists of Indiana* (New York: The Century Co., 1921), 263.

³⁷*Ibid.*

as simple weaving and tilo matting, a type of weaving made from the soft bark of a fir tree.³⁸ In both scenarios she suggested using natural materials, with little or no decoration added, and stressed that the end result be of utility, all requirements that fall within Arts and Crafts. In the national Arts and Crafts journal *Brush and Pencil*, Seegmiller again detailed the work being done in Indianapolis schools toward the inclusion of practical arts. She wrote:

From the support given to the art movement by the school authorities, the earnest work of the teachers, the pleasure of the children, and the sympathy and support of the artists and the community at large, the arts and crafts movement had birth.³⁹

Her dedication to the Arts and Crafts movement paved the way for the success of manual training in the public schools.



Fig. 2--Charity Dye

Diminutive in stature but not intellect was Shortridge English teacher Charity Dye. Born in Kentucky in 1849, Dye earned a bachelor of philosophy degree from the University of Chicago via summer school and

³⁸Wilhemina Seegmiller, “Elementary Hand Work in Indianapolis,” *The School Arts Book*, IV (March 1905) : 388-393.

³⁹Wilhemina Seegmiller, “The Arts and Crafts Movement in Indianapolis,” *Brush and Pencil*, IV (April 1899) : 217-18.

correspondence course work in 1900.⁴⁰ In 1874 she began teaching at a local elementary school then transferred to Shortridge High School shortly thereafter. She was a tireless promoter of the arts, and during her tenure at Shortridge she produced a number of historical pageants, was a planner for the state's 1916 centennial celebration, and even authored two books. An admirer of William Morris, Dye formed the William Morris Society at Shortridge in 1905, the same year that the Arts and Crafts Society of Indianapolis incorporated.⁴¹ The William Morris Society studied Morris's writings and poetry, and student interest was high.⁴² Initially only open to her English students, Dye eventually allowed any student to join. She traveled to England in 1907 and brought back with her pieces from the Morris & Company design firm to show club members.⁴³ In 1908 the art students decorated Dye's classroom, and included a portrait of William Morris out of her respect for his writings.⁴⁴ Dye retired in 1912 and died nine years later at age 72. Indianapolis Public School 27 is named in her honor.

Born in Michigan in 1847, Roda Selleck dedicated forty years to teaching art at Shortridge High School. Little is known of her early life and education. Appointed in

⁴⁰Laura Sheerin Gaus, *Shortridge High School, 1864-1981: In Retrospect* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1985), 32.

⁴¹Irma A. Linton, "Charity Dye," in *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, eds. David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 517-18.

⁴²Gaus, *Shortridge High School*, 79.

⁴³Barry Shifman, *The Arts & Crafts Metalwork of Janet Payne Bowles* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art and Indiana University Press, 1993), 18.

⁴⁴Gaus, *Shortridge High School*, 83.

1883 as a drawing teacher for Shortridge, Selleck eventually administered the school's Department of Fine Arts.⁴⁵ In addition to drawing, watercolor, and art history and appreciation, Selleck branched out into practical arts and taught classes in metalwork, jewelry design, leatherwork, stenciling, and wood-block printing. In 1912 *The School Arts Book* published an article by Selleck that described her stenciling and wood-block lessons and included photographs of students' work. Stenciling was a favorite decorative technique for Arts and Crafts, and the designs show Arts and Crafts' motifs of stylized nature forms. She called stenciling the "most exacting master of simplicity" by teaching students "how to sweep away all that is trivial and unnecessary to design."⁴⁶ Selleck's emphasis on eliminating the unnecessary in design reflects her understanding of the contemporary Arts and Crafts aesthetic.

In addition to these artistic skills, Selleck's most lasting legacy was as a pottery instructor. It is said that "few schools in the nation had as prominent a pottery as did Shortridge High School," and this was due to Selleck's tutelage.⁴⁷ Selleck's students produced professional-quality pottery in a variety of forms, such as dishes, bowls, vases, and jugs. The shapes were simple and clean, and they applied minimal stylized decorative motifs to the surfaces. The finished glazes were usually earth-tone matte glazes, with the end results falling within the Arts and Crafts style. Selleck further inspired her classes by

⁴⁵Ibid., 52.

⁴⁶Roda E. Selleck, "Blown Stenciling," *The School Arts Book*, XI (March 1912) : 698.

⁴⁷Robert M. Taylor, Jr., "The Selridge Pottery of Shortridge High School," *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History*, 6 (Winter 1994) : 28.

inviting guest speakers, such as famous Arts and Crafts potter Ernest Bachelder of California, to lecture and provide demonstrations for the students.⁴⁸

In 1898 Seegmiller and Selleck conceived of the idea to hold an art exhibit at Shortridge High School.⁴⁹ The school board agreed, and in April they held a week-long art exhibition there in which professional and amateur student artists could display their work. The school board allowed students to take field trips to Shortridge to see the exhibits, and special streetcars were scheduled to transport children back and forth.⁵⁰ The city's professional artists, including Richard Gruelle and Otto Stark, publicly praised the educators' efforts to expose students to all the types of art on display. One article stated:

The object of the exhibition, beyond the entertainment it affords, is to create among the different schools and among the patrons of the schools a desire for the artistic, in order that the school buildings may be adorned with high-grade pictures, and thereby the artistic taste of the pupils increased.⁵¹

The exhibit's success compelled Seegmiller and Selleck to host another in 1899.

Shortridge's *Daily Echo* promoted the event among the students, calling for art submissions and support. The *Echo* praised Manual High School students' turned wood work and designs, stating "Some of the work which the boys at that school are doing is truly remarkable."⁵² Selleck's students displayed a variety of fine and practical art, ranging

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹"Arts and Crafts Exhibit," *Indianapolis News*, 18 April 1899.

⁵⁰Otto Stark, "The Children and Art," *Indianapolis News*, 13 April 1899.

⁵¹"The Arts and Crafts Exhibit," *Indianapolis News*, 18 April 1898.

⁵²"Arts and Crafts," *Shortridge Daily Echo*, 24 April 1899.

from water colors to leather belts and copper urns. Despite high turn outs and public support, the annual art exhibits held at Shortridge ceased after only two years. This was likely due to the anticipated opening of the John Herron Art Institute at that time. Due to bickering among Herron’s heirs, planning was delayed longer than expected, however.

When the Herron Art Institute finally opened in 1905 amateur artists found a new venue to display their work. At the Annual Exhibit of Indiana Artists held in 1916, Selleck’s potters exhibited their wares under the name “Selridge Pottery,” a combination of Selleck and Shortridge.⁵³ The name became well known, and Selridge Pottery was a regular entry at Herron’s annual exhibit. By 1921, the *Daily Echo* wrote that due to its professional-grade designs Selleck’s Selridge Pottery was “famous throughout the state.”⁵⁴



Fig. 3--Roda Selleck

Only two days after her retirement from teaching Selleck suffered a heart attack and died. Tributes described her as a “pioneer along the line of handicraft work,” and former pupils declared that they were not merely her students but her “disciples.”⁵⁵ In

⁵³Taylor, “Selridge Pottery,” 28.

⁵⁴“Art Department Plans Exhibition at Library,” *Shortridge Daily Echo*, 8 December 1921.

⁵⁵“Tribute Paid Dead Shortridge Teacher,” *Indianapolis Star*, 17 November 1924.

1928, when Shortridge High School moved to its final location at 34th and Meridian streets, the school included the Roda Selleck Art Gallery in her memory.

In 1912 another art teacher joined the Shortridge staff. Janet Payne Bowles, an Indianapolis native born in the early 1870s, attended Shortridge and was one of Roda Selleck's students. During her career as a professional artist her art metal pieces garnered acclaim nationally and internationally, and she was placed within an elite group of other artists considered as "genius" in their field.⁵⁶ But it took Bowles nearly twenty years to learn and hone her craft in art metal and jewelry making in Boston and New York. When she returned to Indianapolis, however, it was as a highly respected artist.

She married Joseph Bowles after high school in 1885, and together they collaborated on a number of artistic endeavors. Joseph Bowles was well known in Indianapolis art circles: he served on the board of the Art Association of Indianapolis, helped found a professional artist organization called the Portfolio Club, and eventually began the influential art journal *Modern Art*. In 1896 the couple moved to Boston, and it was there that Janet Bowles learned in six weeks time the art of metalsmithing in a metal foundry.⁵⁷ In 1902 the Bowleses moved again, this time to New York, where Janet trained in jewelry design at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Through a mutual friend, she was commissioned by millionaire J. Pierpont Morgan, a partnership that would last for

⁵⁶"Metal Work by Mrs. Bowles," *Art News*, 3 January 1925, p. 2; Rena Tucker Kohman, "Her Metalcraft Spiritual," *International Studio*, LXXX (October 1924) : 54.

⁵⁷Shifman, *Janet Payne Bowles*, 14.

four years.⁵⁸ She also designed many ecclesiastical pieces like chalices and fonts for churches in New York and cathedrals in Florence, Italy. It was also during this period that



Fig. 4--Janet Payne Bowles

she began exhibiting her work at shows and winning prestigious awards.

The Bowleses were steeped in the Arts and Crafts movement, and while in Boston they established ties with the influential Boston Arts and Crafts Society. They lived for a time in an artists' commune begun by writer Sinclair Lewis based on the principles of gender equality, communal housekeeping and childcare, and creative freedom. Janet Bowles' designs in metal reflected no historical influences, an Arts and Crafts goal, and she

created hand crafted pieces meant for utility and beauty. Lastly, she believed in remaining honest to the material at hand and in the work itself. A thick piece of copper should not be hammered thin to suit the designer's needs; rather, the designer should start with a thin sheet and remain true to the material's character.

It was as a distinguished professional artist that Bowles returned to Indianapolis after separating from her husband in 1912 at age 39. Not a teacher by trade, she undoubtedly accepted the teaching position at Shortridge to earn an income for her and her two children. Bowles kept a shop of her own fitted out with furnaces, ovens, and other equipment used to make art metal, and she continued to receive orders from New

⁵⁸Ibid., 15.

York jeweler Gorham for hand crafted jewelry.⁵⁹ Like many female artists of her era, Bowles turned to teaching to supplement income earned from her art. After her teaching duties were over, Bowles dedicated three hours daily to working in her shop.⁶⁰

Bowles' classes grew in popularity first among girls who enjoyed the jewelry making classes. Eventually Bowles introduced art metal courses which drew more boys with projects like copper boxes, hammered bowls, and even swords



Fig. 5--Metalwork and pottery made by art students of Janet Payne Bowles.

and bayonets.⁶¹ After Selleck died in 1924, Bowles eventually took over the pottery classes as well. Students continued to flock to Shortridge's art courses, and in the early 1920s Bowles started an Art Appreciation Club and in 1927 she began a Workmanship Guild whose members she selected based on skill.⁶² Additionally, the aptitude of her students' work led to notable exhibits in New York and Chicago. One exhibit held in a Fifth Avenue art gallery in New York chose only six schools to participate, and Shortridge

⁵⁹"Indianapolis Woman Said to Rank Highly Among Gem Workers," *Indiana Daily Times*, 29 November 1920.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Shifman, *Janet Payne Bowles*, 19.

⁶²Ibid., 21; Gaus, *Shortridge High School*, 125.

was the sole high school among such renowned institutions as the Pratt Institute, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Rhode Island School of Design.⁶³

Bowles also continued to display her own jewelry and metal work, and she was a regular contributor to Herron's Annual Exhibition of Indiana Artists. During her lifetime at least two museums purchased her work for their collections: the Kensington Museum in England and the Boston Fine Arts Museum.⁶⁴ She taught at Shortridge for thirty years, until she retired in 1942 at age 69. She passed away in 1948 and left her estate to her children. In 1968 they donated the collection to the Indianapolis Museum of Art where visitors can view her pieces today.⁶⁵

Meanwhile, across town at Manual Training High School, a manual arts teacher named Harry Wood was busy instructing his own students in the handcrafts. Wood was born in Lexington, Kentucky in 1879, and his family moved to Indianapolis when he was a preschooler. He attended the Pennsylvania School of Industrial Art in Philadelphia in the 1890s and came back to Indianapolis upon graduation. His first job was as a cartoonist for the *Indianapolis News* from 1899 to 1900, but in 1900 he began teaching drawing courses at Manual. Fine art teaching was not his background, however, so in 1904 Wood accepted a position as an interior designer for a Philadelphia firm. In 1906 he came back to Indianapolis to teach again at Manual, but this time in wood working and printing

⁶³Gaus, *Shortridge High School*, 125.

⁶⁴"Indianapolis Woman Said to Rank Highly Among Gem Workers," *Indiana Daily Times*, 29 November 1920.

⁶⁵Barry Shifman, "Truth to Material: Janet Payne Bowles, Metalworker," *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History*, 6 (Winter 1994) : 15.

courses for the sixth through eighth grades, a position to which he was more suited. He remained there until 1910, when he left to teach metalwork and jewelry classes for one year at Shortridge High School before the arrival of Janet Payne Bowles. According to Wood, it was the first organized jewelry making class in a public school setting.⁶⁶ As the art metal instructor, his students made watch fobs, necklaces and broaches, cufflinks and bracelets in both copper and silver. He summed up his philosophy on handcrafted jewelry with this statement: "During the last few years the market has been flooded with so called 'Arts and Crafts' jewelry . . . I try to make my pupils feel that this is not art," because it was machine made.⁶⁷

In 1911 Wood returned to Manual, where he would remain for the rest of his career. He taught courses that ranged from wood working, and cabinet and furniture making to shoe repair, stained glass design, and printing. Eventually the curriculum included more refined handcrafts including pottery, art metal, jewelry, stenciling, and silk screening. Manual's blend of vocational and traditional education at the secondary school level made it among the first of such schools in the nation.⁶⁸ As a result, Wood frequently lectured across the country on the school's curriculum. He infused his speeches with references to "New Education" theories and Arts and Crafts principles. In a typical Dewey-esque statement, Wood said in a speech: "The sole purpose of the school is to

⁶⁶Wood, "History of Art," Harry E. Wood Collection, 14.

⁶⁷Harry Wood, "The Correlation of Art and Manual Training," 1910.

⁶⁸Ted Stahly, "Manual High School," in *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, eds. David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 959.

teach people how to live and how to make a living.”⁶⁹ He declared in another talk that “The 3-R emphasis will not meet present day needs any more than the horse and buggy will take the place of the present day high-powered automobile.”⁷⁰

Yet Wood reserved his most passionate speech making for the importance of good art: “Everything we touch has in it the element which pleases or displeases us and that element is ART.”⁷¹ Good art to Wood could be found in commonplace objects devoid of historic ornament, created by a designer trained in the modern aesthetic of Arts and Crafts. He called such designers the era’s greatest artists, for they introduced beauty in the average person’s everyday life.⁷² Wood felt strongly that good design came from proper training.



Fig. 6--Harry Wood

⁶⁹Harry Wood, “The Place of Industrial Arts in the Junior High School,” June 1925, Harry E. Wood Collection, Manuscript and Visual Collections Department, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

⁷⁰Harry Wood, “Art in Everyday Living,” November 11, 1936, Harry E. Wood Collection, Manuscript and Visual Collections Department, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid.

He bemoaned the state of goods for sale at department stores for their lack of design:

It is so hard for a designer to let go of an old idea . . . he borrows from the past without regard for use or material. To-day we are surrounded by many poor examples of design simply because the designer has used certain things in an inappropriate way.⁷³

But just as important, and perhaps more so, in creating better design was the buying public. In numerous speeches Wood addressed his audience as consumers, and challenged them to demand better. Sounding astonishingly like William Morris, Wood stated in one lecture: “Standards in art will only be raised when we as a buying public refuse to purchase that which is ugly.”⁷⁴ Before the Western Arts Association in a speech entitled, “The Most Important Person in the World,” Wood led his audience to believe that he felt designers were that person. Only at the end of the speech does he reveal the true person he means—the consumer: “It is YOU, *the Consumer*, for you influence the products of the designer by your selection or rejection of the things he makes.”⁷⁵ Wood beseeched his audience to buy goods that were designed well, were truthful in construction, had no useless ornament, and above all served a useful purpose.

⁷³Harry Wood, Scrapbook of Harry Wood, Harry E. Wood Collection, Manuscript and Visual Collections Department, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

⁷⁴Wood, “Art in Everyday Living.”

⁷⁵Harry Wood, “The Most Important Person in the World,” Harry E. Wood Collection, Manuscript and Visual Collections Department, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

In 1912 Wood became director of all manual training in the Indianapolis public schools in addition to continuing as a teacher at Manual. As an instructor, his assignments were often Arts and Crafts inspired designs. In his furniture classes, Wood assigned projects like built-in buffets, Morris chairs, and oak bookcases. The school used many of the pieces, and in one instance the students designed an entire room in the school. The rest room, a space used as a quiet area, was designed by the students of Manual and reflected the Arts and Crafts style. The wood working classes made chairs in a Mission style with a dark stain, the sewing students made pillows and curtains, the forging class made the lighting, and the room was painted a matte “cool green.”⁷⁶

The Manual students themselves understood their training as not simply to learn a trade, but to become skilled workmen. In their student newspaper they discussed the role of art, and quoted William Morris’s famous statement that “Art is the expression by man of his pleasure in labor.” They believed that the future was promising for them: “Aside from feeling that the work has been one of happy hours, lacking in drudgery, we view the future with prospects of bright opportunities.”⁷⁷ In April 1908 Manual students exhibited their work at a meeting of the Western Manual Training Teachers’ Association held at Shortridge High School. The large Mission chairs, lamps, hammered brass umbrella

⁷⁶“The Rest Room,” *Manual Training High School Annual* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Public Schools, 1906).

⁷⁷“The Practical Value of Drawing,” *Manual Training High School Mirror*, June 1907.

stands, and tables in their display resembled “a corner of an Arts and Crafts room.”⁷⁸

These endeavors show Wood’s influence on his students in their designs.

Harry Wood was promoted in 1926 to director of vocational education and manual training in the public schools, supervising all grades and evening classes. He continued to travel all over the country to deliver speeches, and he used his summers to instruct or lecture at art schools in Chicago, New York, and Washington state.⁷⁹ Wood’s legacy continued to shape the curriculum at Manual High School well into the 1950s. By 1953, the newly renamed Harry E. Wood School, formerly Manual High, had become all vocational.

With its opening in 1902, the Herron School of Art provided Shortridge and Manual High School graduates a place to pursue an advanced art degree without leaving home. From the beginning Herron formed a close association with the city’s secondary art teachers and students. In 1909 the state legislature enacted a law that gave a small percentage of the city’s taxes to the Indianapolis Art Association in return for free admission to students and teachers at Herron’s art museum and studios, including lectures, and instruction for students and teachers nominated by the superintendent at half-cost.⁸⁰ Although Herron primarily taught the fine arts, the Indianapolis public schools’

⁷⁸“Shops,” *Manual Training High School Mirror*, May 1908.

⁷⁹Harry Wood, “Biographical Sketch of Training and Experience of Harry E. Wood, c.1950,” Harry E. Wood Collection, Manuscript and Visual Collections Department, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

⁸⁰“What the Schools are Attempting To Do,” *Indianapolis Public Schools’ Annual Report for 1908-09* (Indianapolis, 1888) p. 95.

superintendent in his 1908-09 report stated, “It is hoped that the lectures will cover a wide range of topics – not only those relating to art, but also to hand work, to crafts, to design, to decoration, and even to history and travel.”⁸¹

Herron eventually offered a variety of applied arts courses, but when it opened the only two such classes were “modern ornament” taught by Brandt Steele, son of Hoosier Group painter T.C. Steele, and “historic and practical ornament” with instructor Alfred B. Lyon.⁸² Within a few years applied arts classes expanded, and Roda Selleck and Harry Wood taught classes in pottery and metal work, respectively. Selleck was in charge of the first exhibit of handicrafts at the annual Indiana Artists Exhibition in 1911.⁸³ The practical arts continued to thrive at Herron even after World War I with classes like china painting, basketry, rug making, weaving, pottery, and interior design.⁸⁴ Herron’s inclusion of applied arts into its primarily fine arts program allowed it to become an innovative art school that was nationally recognized by the 1920s.

Progressive educators stressed individual child development, while preparing the child for the practicalities in a life shaped by industrial capitalism. The emphasis of such education was utility, and to learn a skill that could be applied in the home or workplace truly applied art to everyday life. This “New Education” facilitated the introduction of

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Harriet G. Warkel, et al., *The Herron Chronicle* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 17.

⁸³“Tribute Paid,” *Indianapolis Star*; Warkel, et al., *Herron Chronicle*, 22, 45.

⁸⁴Warkel, et al., *Herron Chronicle*, 35.

handicrafts into the curriculum, made popular by the contemporary Arts and Crafts movement. In Indianapolis, teachers like Charity Dye, Roda Selleck, Janet Payne Bowles, and Harry Wood, led by art director Wilhemina Seegmiller, took these ideals in education and put them into practice in their classrooms. Dye lectured on the writings of Morris, and Selleck, Bowles, and Wood challenged their students with assignments in pottery, or jewelry, or wood working that accentuated the beauty in everyday objects. Through their instruction, they introduced an entire generation to the art and philosophy of the Arts and Crafts movement.

In the early 1900s, an ethos of reform touched all aspects of life. In industry, the economy, health care, education, and conservation. Progressive reformers advocated change in the status quo. Design and aesthetic reform of the Arts and Crafts movement played an intriguing auxiliary role to Progressivism. Arts and Crafts' emphasis on simplicity and purpose, content and integrity, resonated with a public who increasingly turned to design for these things, more than their homes did. But it was their homes that were in a state of flux as well. As a result, the Arts and Crafts style flourished during this period, especially in residential architecture where it was most suited. The mid-twentieth-century architect Frank Lloyd Wright noted in the foreword to a 1903 book, as well as in the more highly heralded collection of Prairie designs, "It is a testament to the quality of construction, to the beauty of the materials employed, to the skill of the craftsman, and to the architecture of the building public that after Arts and Crafts movement a legacy is left to Indianapolis."

Creating the ideal home was not only the preoccupation of designers during the early 1900s, reformers also began to discuss the qualities of a proper home environment.

"The Suburban House and Suburban Life," *The House Beautiful*, July 1903.

CHAPTER IV : Arts and Crafts' Legacy: Architecture

And if it is well situated, is well built, is charming within and without, is supplied with every essential modern convenience, and is surrounded with other charming houses filled with charming people, it affords the pleasantest kind of a life, and is doing more to humanize humanity than any other single resource of civilization.¹

In America in the early 1900s, an ethos of reform touched all aspects of life. In politics, the economy, health care, education, and conservation, Progressive reformers advocated change from the status quo. Design and aesthetic reforms of the Arts and Crafts movement played an intriguing ancillary role to Progressivism. Arts and Crafts' emphasis on simplicity and purpose, comfort and integrity resonated with a public who increasingly not only wished for these things from their home life, but from their government and work place as well. As a result, the Arts and Crafts style flourished during this period, especially in residential architecture where it was most suited. The interior style found its perfect exterior mate in the bungalow and foursquare, as well as in the more high-styled Craftsman and Prairie designs. As a testament to their quality construction, many of these buildings continue to embellish the city's visual landscape, and their architecture is the enduring public face of the Arts and Crafts movement's legacy in Indianapolis.

Creating the ideal home was not only the preoccupation of designers during the early 1900s; reformers also began to discuss the qualities of a proper home environment.

¹"The Suburban House and Suburban Life," *The House Beautiful*, July 1903.

Progressives believed that one's surroundings influenced moral development. Viewed from this perspective, the home's influence took on ideological ramifications as a vehicle for change.² As a microcosm of the world at large, the home's contents and design reflected the prevailing attitudes and ideals of the day. Trends like creating efficient kitchens related to changing notions of egalitarianism between the sexes. Simple design and craftsmanship promoted morality in its directness and honesty. The concept of integrated pieces such as built-in sideboards, inglenooks, and window seats meant more space, but it also reflected the germ theory's burgeoning influence, in which the elimination of dust-catching furniture became a housekeeping crusade.³ Similarly, sleeping porches added to the home's aesthetic, but it also provided fresh air and sunlight as preventatives to diseases like tuberculosis.⁴ The total integration of Arts and Crafts homes allowed everything within and without—from the Mission furniture to the plain exterior walls—to tangibly represent an aesthetic as well as a morality. The early 1900s home, thus, functioned as an “avatar for the social, political, and aesthetic ideologies of the period.”⁵

²Janet Kardon, “A Centenary Project: Stage One—The Home as Ideological Platform,” in *The Ideal Home, 1900-1920*, ed. Janet Kardon (New York: Henry N. Abrams, Inc., 1993), 26; Barbara Mayer, *In The Arts and Crafts Style* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1993), 56.

³Gordon Bock, “The Making of Built-Ins,” *Old House Journal* (Sept.-Oct., 2003) : 79.

⁴Cheryl Robertson, “House and Home in the Arts and Crafts Era: Reforms for Simpler Living,” in *“The Art that is Life”: The Arts & Crafts Movement in America, 1875-1920*, ed. Wendy Kaplan (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1998), 346.

⁵Kardon, “A Centenary Project,” 27.

Because of its moral component, the Arts and Crafts style flourished in residential architecture in America during the period from roughly 1900 to 1920. Steeped in the reformist zeal of John Ruskin and William Morris, architects of the style identified their work with that of social reformers. Since Progressivism and Arts and Crafts shared similar ideologies and social goals, this connection is easily understood. Advocates for both movements emphasized the effectiveness of collective rather than individual action, explaining the rationale behind the formation of so many clubs and societies during this period. Also, they both shared an idealistic belief that progress was inevitable. Like most Progressives, American Arts and Crafts leaders came from predominately white, Protestant, bourgeois backgrounds, and upheld patriotic visions of republicanism. Because of their comfortable middle-class status, American leaders did not embrace Morris's socialist philosophy that had so defined the English Arts and Crafts movement, but instead were put off by political overtones that threatened democracy as they understood it.

Progressive and American Arts and Crafts patriarch Gustav Stickley directly linked the importance of good art and simple living to the broader social reform movements of his day. In 1909 Stickley wrote, "we remain firm in the conviction that the root of all reform lies in the individual and the life of the individual is shaped mainly by home surroundings."⁶ Stickley's call for a return of comfort and family togetherness appealed to Progressives as the antidote to modern industrial life.

⁶Gustav Stickley, "The Craftsman Idea of the Kind of Home Environment That Would Result From More Natural Standards of Life and Work," in *Craftsman Homes* (New York: Craftsman Publishing Company, 1909; reprint, Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2002), 194.

Speaking the language of Progressives, Stickley advised Americans to pare down their possessions to achieve not only greater peace of mind, but more importantly, greater efficiency. For Stickley, greater efficiency at home meant better workers, since they were no longer encumbered by disorganization in their personal lives.⁷ Arts and Crafts was not meant for the “vast hordes of immigrants who pour into the country each year,” however, for they found it too difficult to adjust to the American way of life.⁸ Instead, Stickley directed his exhortations to the propertied middle-classes, the “better class of artisans” who desired to escape life in the factory.⁹ Wedded to Progressivism in its shared goals and fears, it is understandable why the Arts and Crafts’ aesthetic appealed to middle America.

With his ideology of reform in tow, Stickley devised *The Craftsman*, a monthly periodical created to influence social reform through design. Extolling the virtues of Morris, *The Craftsman* quickly earned the coveted role of taste-maker in America, and the magazine spread the Arts and Crafts style to all parts of the country.¹⁰

Progressives spoke out in favor of traditional family life and values in the face of massive immigration which threatened their world view. Arts and Crafts architects responded in kind with a new style designed to strengthen family togetherness and unity.

⁷Ibid., 195.

⁸Ibid., 201.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Gustav Stickley, *What is Wrought in the Craftsman Workshops* (Syracuse, NY: Mason Press, 1904; reprint, Watkins Glen, NY: American Life Books, 1982), 56 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

These architects created designs that were not united by similarity of form, but of function: they believed that architecture could act as an agent for reform. Architects gave Arts and Crafts architecture a moral undertone by stripping off layers of historic stylistic influences in favor of a brand “new” style. Some art historians consider this period the beginning of modernism in America.¹¹

In England, where the movement began, Arts and Crafts architecture drew heavily from Gothic and Tudor Revivals, two styles firmly rooted in historic precedents. In America, however, Arts and Crafts architects approached the style differently. Anxious to create a new American style shorn of historicism, and always with Progressive reforms in mind, architects let their creative energy loose. They created suggestive designs by utilizing a building’s massing, scale, and elevation to express ideas such as warmth, security, and permanence.¹² Characteristics like wide overhanging roofs with deep eaves suggested protection and enclosure. The thick, imposing walls indicated strength, while the tall narrow doors, windows, and chimneys further accentuated the facade’s bulk. The building’s massive scale and proportion purposefully dwarfed its inhabitants to enhance their feelings of safety and security. Architects preferred asymmetrical massing to adjust to the building’s interior plan, and they advocated the use of locally available building materials to integrate the house within its setting. Architects used exterior ornament sparingly, and preferred simple stylized motifs from nature. Most believed that the sheer

¹¹Gillian Naylor, et al., *The Encyclopedia of Arts and Crafts: The International Arts Movement, 1850-1920* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1989), 32.

¹²*Ibid.*, 34.

craftsmanship of their design was the only ornament needed. Additionally, Arts and Crafts architects sometimes oversaw the interior appointments, as well, in a further effort for total integration. Called the “architecture of character,” Arts and Crafts architecture allowed its advocates to create designs devoid of historic influence.¹³

Due in large part to the proliferation of shelter magazines published at the turn of the last century, such as *House Beautiful*, *House and Garden*, *The Ladies’ Home Journal*, and professional journals like *The Craftsman* and *Inland Architect and News Record*, the architecture of Arts and Crafts flourished. Most periodicals published floor plans and elevations in their issues from noted architects like Frank Lloyd Wright, many of which reflected the new style of Arts and Crafts. The popularity of these journals continued to grow during the first two decades of the twentieth century, helping to spread the look of Arts and Crafts to homes across America. At its height, circulation for Stickley’s *The Craftsman* was estimated at 60,000 in 1910.¹⁴

In Indianapolis, examples of Arts and Crafts architecture can be found throughout the city.¹⁵ Craftsman bungalows and foursquares alone number in the hundreds. The highest concentration of Arts and Crafts buildings are logically found in areas where development coincided with the movement’s popularity, roughly the period from 1910 to

¹³Ibid., 50.

¹⁴Susan Slade, “The House Beautiful: Indianapolis Architecture of the Arts and Crafts Movement, 1900-1920,” photocopy, p. 5, Robert Taylor Special Collection, Manuscript and Visual Collections Department, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

¹⁵For the purposes of this study, any reference to Indianapolis will be taken to mean all of Marion County.

1925. Thus, Washington, Warren, and Center townships include the most Arts and Crafts styles within Indianapolis since most of the city's residential growth in the early twentieth century was north and east of downtown. Arts and Crafts architecture provides the strongest evidence of the movement's legacy in Indianapolis as it is so visible, and thus accessible, to the general public. While local art museums contain Arts and Crafts pieces from local artists such as Brandt Steele and Janet Payne Bowles in their collections, it is the movement's architecture that has greater impact because it left a lasting and tangible impression on the city's landscape.

Specifically, a collection of Indianapolis neighborhoods feature a higher concentration of Arts and Crafts architecture. These locales include the Meridian Park Historic District, which lies between 34th Street, Washington Boulevard, 30th Street, and Pennsylvania Street. Within this historic district lies the city's largest collection of Craftsman style foursquares and bungalows.¹⁶ The 3200 block of Washington Boulevard contains Washington Court, a small side street that features a number of Craftsman foursquares. Platted in 1911 by the Jose-Balz Company, Washington Court still maintains its historic integrity.¹⁷ Other similar neighborhoods containing numerous Craftsman foursquares and bungalows include the Sutherland Avenue Historic District, which extends along Sutherland Avenue from Park Avenue to College Avenue just south of Fall Creek; the Meridian-Kessler neighborhood, which lies between 38th Street and Kessler

¹⁶James Massey and Shirley Maxwell, *Arts & Crafts Design in America: A State-by-State Guide* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1998), 125.

¹⁷Susan M. Barrett, "Washington Place," Reference Collections, Indiana Preservation Center, Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, Indianapolis.

Boulevard between Meridian Street and the Monon Trail; Oliver Johnson's Woods Historic District, located between Central Avenue and College Avenue, and 44th to 46th streets; and finally, the Irvington Historic District, situated south of Pleasant Run Parkway from Arlington to Emerson Avenues. Additionally, a few neighborhoods boast a large number of bungalows, such as University Heights Historic District, from roughly Windermire Street south to Lawrence Avenue, and Bowman Avenue east to Matthews Avenue in Perry Township. Lastly, the Meridian Street Historic District, which stretches along Meridian Street from 40th Street to Westfield Boulevard, contains a number of foursquares and two outstanding Prairie designs.

Like the rest of the country, Arts and Crafts architecture in Indianapolis was generally applied to residential construction, including a number of apartment buildings. Only a few public and semi-public buildings were fashioned in the style, most notably the Indianapolis Public Library Branch Number 6 at 1801 Nowland Avenue and the Independent Turnverein at 902 N. Meridian Street. Virtually no commercial buildings existed. However, Arts and Crafts architecture in all variety of expressions – from modest bungalows to architect-designed Prairie style mansions – found their home in Indianapolis. The rest of this chapter will be devoted to describing and interpreting both the city's representative and outstanding Arts and Crafts architecture. Specifically, vernacular architecture will include examples of Craftsman bungalows and foursquares, or non-architect designed Craftsman style houses. High style examples will include Prairie and architect-designed Craftsman buildings. It is important to also note that many houses comprise more than one style, which was a common building method. Tudor

Revival/Craftsman combinations, or Mediterranean Revival paired with Prairie, were pervasive in this period. As long as the building retains sufficient elements of Arts and Crafts to make it easily identifiable, the purity of the style is not as important.

Lastly, in an effort to construct a cohesive methodology for this chapter, I have relied extensively on Marion County interim reports published by Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, in conjunction with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources' Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. Due to the large amount of Arts and Crafts architecture in Indianapolis, it quickly became apparent that some sort of filtering had to be done to construct a manageable interpretation. After consulting each township report for Marion County, I then selected only those Arts and Crafts-style properties rated "outstanding." Such a rating means that the property contains enough "historic or architectural significance" to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.¹⁸ In other words, the building is in excellent shape and it retains the elements of its historic design, such as original doors, windows, and siding, that contribute to its overall integrity. Surprisingly, nearly forty properties met this criteria in Indianapolis. For a complete listing of all the Arts and Crafts buildings rated "outstanding" compiled by township, see the chart at the end of this chapter (Appendix A).

However, having stated this methodology, it is important to first note one house in particular that did not rank as "outstanding," but undoubtedly should have, given its

¹⁸Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory, *Washington Township, Marion County Interim Report* (Indianapolis: Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, 1999), viii.

pedigree. Literally “discovered” only a few years ago by local historic preservationist and Irvington historian Paul Diebold, the Carlos and Anne Recker House at 59 North Hawthorne Lane in Irvington is a one and one-half story bungalow based directly on Gustav Stickley’s “Design 8” from the July 1905 issue of *The Craftsman*.¹⁹ The house was built in 1908 for interior designer Carlos Recker and his wife Anne, who received personal design assistance during construction from Stickley himself according to the *Indianapolis Star*.²⁰ Historians have argued that houses built from Stickley’s designs represent the earliest and most obvious form of Arts and Crafts architecture in America.²¹ This house is perhaps the earliest example of Arts and Crafts design in Indianapolis, as well as being an early example nationwide. In fact, the 1909 *Star* article cites this house as the first Craftsman home in the city.²²



Fig. 1--Recker House

The Recker House subsequently belonged to a series of owners, and over time its ties to Stickley were forgotten. Finally, in the late 1990s, Diebold’s research on the house

¹⁹Paul C. Diebold, *Greater Irvington: Architecture, People and Places on the Indianapolis Eastside* (Indianapolis: Irvington Historical Society, 1997), 69.

²⁰“How Others Have Built, No 1–A, A Craftsman House,” *Indianapolis Star*, 17 January 1909.

²¹James D. Kornwolf, “The Arts and Crafts in American Houses and Gardens,” in *The Ideal Home, 1900-1920: The History of Twentieth Century American Craft*, ed. Janet Kardon (New York: Henry N. Abrams, Inc., 1993), 116.

²²“How Others Have Built,” *Indianapolis Star*, 17 January 1909.

uncovered its historic significance. Presently the house retains little of its original design.²³ In 1908, the house's exterior was composed of stained shingles on the upper story, and rough-hewn planks along the bottom; today, light green aluminum siding covers the entire facade. Previous owners made numerous interior changes, as well, most notably the removal of a Stickley-designed brass fireplace hood and enclosure.²⁴

Despite these unfortunate alterations, the house's significance is its association with the patriarch of the American Arts and Crafts movement, as well as its rarity, and for both reasons it was successfully nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. According to Diebold, the house is the sole representation in Indianapolis of a design originating from Stickley's Craftsman Home Builder's Club, and is the only extant example in Indiana.²⁵

The Recker house is constructed in the Craftsman bungalow style, but bungalows came in many shapes and sizes, and thus require characterization. It is generally accepted that the term bungalow originated from the Indian word "bangla," for a small, one or one and one-half story residence. Adopted in England and America first as a vacation home, and later as a primary residence, the bungalow became the dominant style nationally from

²³This photo and all subsequent photos in this chapter were taken by the author.

²⁴"Craftsman House: Series of 1905, Number VIII," *The Craftsman* 8 (July 1905) : 673.

²⁵National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Carlos and Anne Recker House, June 13, 1996, prepared by Paul C. Diebold. (Copy located at Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana.)

1910 to the early 1920s.²⁶ California architects Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene helped to popularize the form by adding distinctive elements such as low-pitched gabled roofs with wide eave overhangs, exposed rafter tails, porches with square column supports, and dormers. The Greenes tended to create high-style designs, but bungalows were more often of a vernacular nature. This was due in part to Stickley's designs in *The Craftsman*, which could be mass-produced and were easily affordable to the middle-classes.

Outstanding Craftsman bungalows in Indianapolis, besides the Recker House, include the properties located at 5850 Carrollton Avenue, 6202 Mooresville Road, 5805 Southeastern Avenue, 4604 East Washington Street, and 3128 North Pennsylvania Avenue (also called Tuckaway).



Fig. 2--5850 Carrollton Avenue

Designed by architect Roger Williams, the high-style Craftsman bungalow at 5850 Carrollton Avenue in Washington Township was built in 1927.²⁷ It features unusual elements such as a double-peaked front dormer and a green tiled hip-on-gable roof, but it

²⁶Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 454.

²⁷Indiana Historic Sites, *Washington Township*, 124.

also has characteristics such as a deep porch, ribbon windows, and decorative brackets that make it a Craftsman style.



Fig. 3--6202 Mooresville Road

width porch.

The c.1915 Craftsman bungalow located on Southeastern Avenue in Warren Township has a far set-back from the road. Its low side-gabled roof has decorative knee braces and deep



Fig. 4--6202 Mooresville Road, side elevation



Fig. 5--5805 Southeastern Avenue

eave overhangs. The house also includes a number of ribbon windows, with two on the front facade alone. The house's tan clapboard siding is accented by a deep brown trim, earthen tones preferred by the Arts and Crafts aesthetic.

Lastly, the house located on East Washington Street in Center Township is a common hybrid of Craftsman bungalow and Tudor Revival styles. Built c.1915, the house is located in a dense residential neighborhood and faces a busy thoroughfare. Important



Fig. 6--4604 E. Washington Street



Fig. 7--4604 E. Washington, side elevation

characteristics of the house include a stone and brick exterior chimney, knee braces under the eaves, two dormers on the front facade, and a full-width porch. The half-timbering of the second story is in line with English Arts and Crafts architecture, whose designers borrowed heavily from the Tudor style.

Another popular form for Arts and Crafts architecture was the foursquare, sometimes referred to as the American foursquare, Midwest Box, or Prairie Box. The foursquare was an enormously popular house style from about 1900 to 1940, and examples can be found from coast to coast.²⁸ The two-story, mainly symmetrical massing is boxy to invoke a feeling of strength and solidity that countered the ornate and delicate ornamentation of the Queen Anne style. The roof is low-pitched, often hipped, and frequently central hipped dormers were present. Windows were often paired, with bays common. Most examples include a deep full-width, single-story front porch with sturdy

²⁸Maurie Van Buren, *House Styles at a Glance* (Atlanta: Longstreet Press, 1991), 108-9.

square porch supports. Foursquares were built out of any material, but wood was most common. Like bungalows, foursquares could be affordably purchased via mail order, which helped spread their popularity among the middle classes.

In Indianapolis literally hundreds of foursquares exist; however, only a select two earned an outstanding designation. These were 3840 N. Delaware Street and 4586 N.



Fig. 8--3840 N. Delaware Street

Broadway Street, both in Washington Township. Though Craftsman in style, they take different variations on the Craftsman aesthetic. The c.1910 house at 3840 N. Delaware is a typical wooden foursquare in a gray tone with matching stucco on the second

story. White trim and stick work break up the facade. The roof is hipped, and although there is no central dormer, the house includes a number of gables over bay window projections. Decorative knee braces adorn the eaves, another classic Craftsman element. The porch is deep and has two tapered porch pier supports, but it is only a half-width in this instance. Numerous paired or ribbon windows are present, and the house’s overall boxy massing make it an unmistakable foursquare.

The second foursquare, located at 4586 N. Broadway Street, is the Judson/Moschelle House. Local residents have dubbed it the “Chinese house,” however,



Fig. 9--Judson/Moschelle House

and one look will explain why. Finished in 1915, this house's design was inspired by a Japanese pagoda, and it originally included a small Japanese-style footbridge near the front entrance.²⁹ The most striking element of the

house is its low-hipped roof with broad, flared

eaves that are adorned by numerous decorative knee brackets beneath. Arched window cornices complete the Oriental feel. A gray stucco facade is broken up by brown stick work and a brown brick base near the sloping foundation. This style is not a typical foursquare by most standards, but its symmetry, roof line, and massing arguably designate it as foursquare.



Fig. 10--Judson/Moschelle House, side elevation

The remaining Arts and Crafts designs, Craftsman and Prairie, typically represent the more high-styled approach to Arts and Crafts architecture designed by professionals. The Indianapolis Architectural Foundation declared that the "American Prairie school of architecture died on the train from Chicago to Indianapolis."³⁰ Based upon findings from the various Marion County interim reports, however, this statement is both unfounded and inaccurate. It is true that Indianapolis architects

²⁹Slade, "The House Beautiful," 14.

³⁰Indianapolis Architectural Foundation, *Indianapolis Architecture* (Indianapolis: Hilltop Press, Inc., 1975), 90.

predominately favored Craftsman over Prairie, and most executed Prairie styles are conservative. In spite of this, the city boasts a small but significant number of works in this style, eight of which were ranked as outstanding.

Local outstanding Craftsman architecture includes a number of residences



Fig. 11--Stewart Manor, front

throughout the city, as well as semi-public apartment complexes, a public library, and an interurban station.³¹

Similar in look and design to

Craftsman-style bungalows and

foursquares, Craftsman in this instance refers to high-styled architecture that fits neither the bungalow nor foursquare parameters. This usually entails greater detailing, such as elaborate rafter ends, stick work, stone or brick facades, and multiple roof planes.

Craftsman styles were sometimes mixed with everything from Tudor or Mediterranean

Revivals to Queen Anne.



Fig. 12--Close up of gable

A fine example of a high-style Craftsman in Indianapolis is Stewart Manor in Wayne Township. Located along “Millionaires’ Row,” as Cold Spring Road is sometimes called, Stewart Mansion is situated in a park-like setting among a number of other estates executed in Arts

and Crafts styles. Built between 1923-24 and designed by Bass Knowton & Co., Stewart

³¹For a complete listing, see Appendix A.

Manor is an excellent example of using local materials for construction, a basic Arts and Crafts tenet.³² The two and one-half story house is built of irregular-coursed fieldstone and the basic rectangular footprint includes numerous wings and projections. The cross-gabled roof includes eyebrow dormers, and the shingled roof is rounded along the eaves. While Craftsman in style, it also comprises elements of Tudor, including diamond-paned windows and decorative timbering in the gables. The house was built for wealthy businessman Charles B. Sommers. Tudor Hall School purchased the home in the late 1950s and used it as a girls dormitory. Finally, in 1970 the house was donated to the Indianapolis public school system.

Indianapolis boasts a number of outstanding Craftsman-style apartment buildings all located in Center Township, including Coulter Flats at 2161 N. Meridian Street, St. James Court at 2102 N. Meridian Street, Cathcart Apartments at 103 E. 9th Street, and the Esplanade Apartments at 3015 N. Pennsylvania Street.

Two of these multi-unit complexes introduced an important Arts and Crafts hybrid to the city. The first, Coulter Flats, built in 1907 and designed by architect Frank J. Schlotter, brought to Indianapolis the Craftsman/Spanish Mission Revival style combination that was so prevalent in the South and West. Financed by real estate entrepreneur David Coulter, Coulter Flats was



Fig. 13--Coulter Flats

³²National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Stewart Manor, March 1976, prepared by Dr. Magdalene A. Davis of Indianapolis Public Schools. (Copy located at Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana)

built to accommodate the city’s population explosion around the turn of the century.³³ Intended for wealthier tenants, each unit included recessed porches and 1,700 square feet of living space.³⁴ Mission details on its exterior include quatrefoil decorations in the shaped parapets and large square porch supports.

The second Spanish Mission Revival/Craftsman apartment complex is the Esplanade Apartments at 3015 North Pennsylvania Street. Built in 1913, the U-shaped building includes a complex hipped roof with a number of shed dormers and hipped gables, with a wide boxed eave. The facade has dark red brick up to the second story, with wood shingles and decorative stick work in the third story corner pavilions. A number of recessed porches also dot the exterior, some with tapered piers and others with



Fig. 14--The Esplanade

square brick supports. Numerous single and paired windows line the facade. The Esplanade offered its residents secluded single-family dwellings, with separate entrances for each unit, and middle-class

families flocked to these apartments.³⁵

³³Diane Brandt, “Renovated apartments take trip in time,” *Indianapolis News*, 1 September 1990.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, The Esplanade Apartments, December 23, 1982, prepared by Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. (Copy located at Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana.)

Lastly, another Craftsman building in the city is important for its rare non-residential design. The Indianapolis Public Library Branch No. 6, located at 1801

Nowland Avenue in Center Township, is a unique public building commissioned in the Craftsman style.



Fig. 15--Public Library Branch No. 6

Finished in 1912, the dark red brick library features a tiled hipped roof with overhanging boxed eaves with numerous decorative knee braces, ribbon windows,

limestone lintels and

stringcourse near

the foundation.



Fig. 16--Front and side elevation

This and the interurban station in the Fort Benjamin Harrison Historic District represent the only two outstanding example of a public building in the Craftsman style in Indianapolis.

Finally, the remaining Arts and Crafts style to impact Indianapolis is Prairie architecture. Almost exclusively high-style in design, the Prairie style is found primarily in upper-class neighborhoods like the North Meridian Street Historic District, Oliver Johnson's Woods Historic District, and along "Millionaire's Row." Often paired with other styles like Craftsman and Mediterranean Revival, Prairie elements nonetheless stand out for their ahistorical precedents. As previously stated in Chapter 1, Prairie architecture originated with Frank Lloyd Wright's Chicago School. It featured low-pitched, usually hipped, roofs with overhanging eaves. Houses were two stories with various wings and

projections, and had asymmetrical facades emphasizing the horizontal rather than the vertical. The earliest Prairie and most common vernacular version is the foursquare.³⁶

Like other Arts and Crafts styles, Prairie faded from fashion by the 1920s, but during its heyday its unique design and ahistorical approach created an exciting new style first spread throughout the Midwest and beyond.

Two important Prairie designs in Indianapolis are both located within the North Meridian Street Historic District. Nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985, the much-celebrated North Meridian corridor features high-style examples of early twentieth century styles ranging from eclectic to revivals. Primary construction occurred from 1920 to 1935 and residents came from the upper-classes.³⁷ Two Prairie houses in the district are located at 4136 and 4366 N. Meridian Street, respectively called the Wolf House and Shea House.



Fig. 17--Wolf House

Wealthy businessman Arthur Wolf commissioned architect Fermor Spencer Cannon to design the two-story reddish-orange

brick house. Unusual for its symmetrical facade, the house nonetheless displays prominent

³⁶McAlester, *A Field Guide*, 439.

³⁷National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, North Meridian Street Historic District, November 26, 1985, prepared by Eric Utz and Suzanne Rollins of Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. (Copy located at Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana.)

Prairie features like a green tile hipped roof with wide overhanging boxed eaves. Cannon used a limestone string course and narrow second-story windows to emphasize the house's horizontality. A massive chimney with three decorative chimney pots dominates the front facade, and a one-story wing on the south balances the porte-cochere on the north. It is said that Cannon wished to express Wright's Prairie vocabulary in the house, but a small, narrow lot prevented him from creating a sweeping horizontal line. He solved this quandary by turning the house 90 degrees, putting the main entrance under the porte-cochere on the north.³⁸ Perhaps the purest form of Prairie architecture in the city, the

house is considered "a direct descendent" of Wright.³⁹



Fig. 18--Shea House

The other Prairie design on North Meridian Street is the Shea House. Designed by local architect

Frank B. Hunter and built in 1922, the house employs multiple methods to emphasize the

horizontal. Beginning with the low roof with extremely wide eaves and continuing with the bands of buff colored brick with limestone string courses and ribbon windows, the

³⁸David J. Bodenhamer, et al., *The Main Stem: The History and Architecture of North Meridian Street* (Indianapolis: Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 1992), 75.

³⁹Indiana Architectural Foundation, *Indianapolis Architecture*, 106.

house is nicknamed the “airplane house” because given a strong wind it threatens to leave the ground.⁴⁰



Fig. 19--Manzy House

Other important Prairie houses in Indianapolis include the Manzy House, the Johnson House, and the unusual Roller/Lawton House, all located in Washington Township. The

Manzy House, at 4455 N. Broadway Street, is a one story c.1920 house that features a low green tile roof with hipped dormers with wide boxed eaves.⁴¹ The red brick facade contains numerous windows, some of which are ribbon, as well as a large exterior chimney. This house is unusual for its single story height, but its horizontality makes it distinctly Prairie.

The Johnson House at 3947 N. Delaware Street is another Prairie variation. Designed by local architect Adolph Scherrer in 1909 for Albert Johnson, president of the Diamond Chain Company, the house’s vertical sweep is tempered by a low hipped roof, massive overhanging eaves, and ribbon windows.⁴² The red brick facade is broken by tan stucco with green stick work in the second story.



Fig. 20--Johnson House

⁴⁰Massey and Maxwell, *Arts & Crafts*, 129.

⁴¹Indiana Historic Sites, *Washington Township*, 135.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 148.



Fig. 21--Roller/Lawton House

Finally, an unusual Prairie version found in Indianapolis is the Roller/Lawton House at 7508 Central Avenue. Built in 1928, the house is located in a wooded residential

setting.⁴³ The one-story house features an almost flat roof line with a half second story

above. Its facade is off-white stucco with ribbon windows and wide eaves.

The house almost evokes an International style in its low roof, smooth plain wall surface, and asymmetry. This house is a prime example of how Prairie architecture heavily influenced modern architecture.

The only outstanding non-residential Prairie style design in Indianapolis is the Independent Turnverein at 902 N. Meridian Street. Once again designed by local architect Adolph Scherrer in 1914, the Turnverein housed a social and political club for many years.⁴⁴ Over time it became the Hoosier Athletic Club, then classroom space for Indiana University. In 1983 it was added to the National Register of Historic Places, and today it houses condominiums. As a combination of Prairie and Renaissance Revival styles, the building's scale and massing are unusual in Indianapolis. Its red tile hipped roof with overhanging eaves adorned by numerous decorative knee braces caps this three-story red

⁴³Ibid., 6.

⁴⁴Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory, *Center Township, Marion County Interim Report* (Indianapolis: Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, 1991), 16.

brick symmetrical structure. A limestone string course defines two sets of matching ribbon windows near the cornice line and on the first story. The Renaissance Revival style main entrance contains elaborate pilasters and scrolled limestone cartouches encasing a highly decorative Palladian window. The rest of the facade's more simple, horizontal features lend to its Prairie feel.



Fig. 22--Independent Turnverein

Given the relatively small size of Indianapolis during the first two decades of the twentieth century, the city nonetheless produced a number of outstanding designs in the Arts and Crafts idiom. And though found predominantly in Washington and Center townships, examples of Arts and Crafts architecture can be spotted all over the city, in rural or urban settings, from modestly scaled to country estate size. It is quite remarkable that Indianapolis managed not only to inculcate Arts and Crafts designs, but to create such wide interpretations as well. From the residential Craftsman/Queen Anne combination in Wayne Township, to the Prairie/Renaissance Revival Style in the Independent Turnverein, the flexibility of Arts and Crafts lent itself to interesting hybrids. Its most important role, however, is as the lasting reminder of the Arts and Crafts movement in Indianapolis. Like an individual thread that is part of a large tapestry, the significance of the numerous Arts and Crafts buildings in Indianapolis lies in their contribution to the fabric of the built environment. Without these gems, the city's architectural heritage would be missing a crucial component, and their very presence enhances the visual landscape. They truly

represent and are the enduring public face of the Arts and Crafts movement in Indianapolis.

The original Arts and Crafts movement, begun in England in the mid-nineteenth century, was effectively over by the end of World War I in both Britain and America. Riddled with contradictions and implausible ideals, the movement did not accomplish its goals of rejecting machines and creating "art for the people"—that is, affordable, well-made, and functional products. Moreover, William Morris's socialist interpretation of the movement was never fully implemented, especially since many Arts and Crafts followers were never committed to his political ideology in the first place.

When viewed this way, the movement seemed an utter failure. But the Arts and Crafts movement's legacy lies not in what it accomplished, but rather what it inspired. One of its major achievements is the attention it focused on quality. From its emphasis on design following function, the movement effectively spurred the public to reconsider the quality of goods they used and the types of homes they lived in. Arts and Crafts terminology entered the mainstream, and even today the term "craftsman" evokes hand-made, quality goods. Its style is considered the precursor or even an art, as Arts and Crafts furnished the vocabulary for twentieth-century artists. Finally, the movement's promotion of crafts also left an indelible mark on art education in secondary schools. In fact, the movement and art classes validated each other in public history. Arts and Crafts aimed to elevate craftsmen in society by arguing the importance of crafts in everyday life, and art classes trained young students in vocational skills that could ostensibly support them after graduation, thereby bolstering productive craftspeople in society.

Further, to understand the American Arts and Crafts movement is to better place

Conclusion

The original Arts and Crafts movement, begun in England in the mid-nineteenth century, was effectively over by the end of World War I in both Britain and America. Riddled with contradictions and implausible ideals, the movement did not accomplish its goals of rejecting machines and creating “art for the people”—that is, affordable, well made, and functional products. Moreover, William Morris’s Socialist interpretation of the movement was never fully implemented, especially since many Arts and Crafts followers were never committed to his political ideology in the first place.

When viewed this way, the movement seemed an utter failure. But the Arts and Crafts movement’s legacy lies not in what it accomplished, but rather what it inspired. One of its main achievements is the attention it focused on quality. From its emphasis on design following function, the movement effectively spurred the public to reconsider the quality of goods they used and the types of homes they lived in. Arts and Crafts terminology entered the mainstream, and even today the term “craftsman” evokes hand made, quality goods. Its style is considered the precursor of modern art, as Arts and Crafts furnished the vocabulary for twentieth century artists. Finally, the movement’s promotion of crafts also left an indelible mark on art education in secondary schools. In fact, the movement and art classes validated each other in a unique way: Arts and Crafts aimed to elevate craftsmen in society by arguing the importance of crafts in human life; art classes trained young students in vocational skills that could ostensibly support them after graduation, thereby bolstering productive craftspeople in society.

Further, to understand the American Arts and Crafts movement is to better place

the contemporary American Progressive movement within its historic context. Arts and Crafts provided an interesting facet to Progressivism. As argued throughout this thesis, Arts and Crafts and Progressivism shared a symbiotic relationship on many levels. Aesthetically, morally, and politically, these two movements approached the social problems of their day similarly. Both were dedicated to reform of the home, work place, and government for the greater good of society. The term “moral uplift” was a rallying cry for both movements, and it was the shared belief that “good” art could raise a nation that was so appealing to the white, middle classes.

As historians like T.J. Jackson Lears and others have effectively argued, though, this notion of “moral uplift” was a veiled attempt at greater homogenization and cultural hegemony. Ruskin’s insistence on the importance of “good” art for the masses was merely his subjective determination, and his way of inculcating the lower classes with the tastes of upper class. In America the same is true. Arts and Crafts leader Gustav Stickley often voiced his concern with the “vast hordes” of immigrants flocking to his country whose tastes were suspect. Their refinement, via exposure to “good” art, would turn them into model Americans. This tone of helping the masses appreciate “good” art is infused throughout Arts and Crafts’ ideology, but its subjectivism is something the movement could never fully define. “Good” art to Morris was only possible by hand craftsmanship; however, “good” art to Wright could be attained by a machine.

Perhaps the problem was that various regions interpreted the Arts and Crafts movement so differently as suited their needs. Where Boston’s Arts and Crafts movement focused on elite aestheticism, Chicago’s movement took a more political viewpoint.

Likewise, Indianapolis' Arts and Crafts created its own unique interpretation. Introduced to the city during the state's "golden era" for the arts, the Arts and Crafts movement found a receptive and eager audience in Indianapolis. Through the proliferation of art clubs and art patrons the movement gained popularity throughout the 1890s by degrees until the culmination of the first Arts and Crafts exhibit in 1898. Also remarkable is the mutual support between fine and practical artists during this period which also aided in the success of Arts and Crafts. No evidence has surfaced that hostilities or a spirit of competition existed between these two artistic groups; in fact, fine artists like Richard Gruelle spoke out in favor of Arts and Crafts numerous times in the city's leading newspapers. It seemed that, in Indianapolis, sympathy for all types of art existed.

Also notable in Indianapolis is the expertise of the city's high school art teachers and the artistic output of their students. In an era when most schools were simply toying with the idea of technical and art courses, Indianapolis' students had a variety of options available to them in these fields. Everything from art jewelry, weaving, and pottery, to wood working, metal smithing, and design was offered to Shortridge and Manual Training students. Most importantly, instructors such as Roda Selleck, Janet Payne Bowles, and Harry Wood indoctrinated an entire generation in the ideology of the Arts and Crafts movement.

Lastly, Indianapolis' Arts and Crafts architecture represents the entire spectrum, from simple Craftsman bungalows to architect-planned Prairie-style estates. Their contribution to the built environment of Indianapolis is the most public face of Arts and Crafts in this city, and is therefore its most enduring legacy.

While Indianapolis did not produce a Frank Lloyd Wright or boast a political figurehead like Oscar Lovell Triggs, the city was part of the overall pathbreaking midwestern interpretation of Arts and Crafts. The opening of the John Herron Art Institute can be linked to the city's interest in the Arts and Crafts movement, as evidenced by the school's practical art courses and exhibits that continue to this day. Additionally, Indianapolis' artists created an atmosphere of support and encouragement for all types of art, practiced by both professionals and amateurs. The most apparent impact of the movement in the city is reflected in the architecture. Large portions of neighborhoods ranging from middle class Meridian-Kessler and Irvington, to upper class Millionaire's Row, feature buildings constructed in the Arts and Crafts idiom. So, while short-lived and relatively small compared with other cities, the Indianapolis Arts and Crafts movement's legacy continues to be felt and seen today.

Appendix A
Outstanding Arts and Crafts Architecture in Indianapolis

Township	Style	Name	Address	Date Built	Site Number	NR nominated
Wayne	Craftsman	Stewart Manor	3650 Cold Spring Road	1923-24	55002	10-8-76
	Prairie/Mediterranean Revival style	Allison Mansion	3200 Cold Spring Road	1911	55003	12-18-70
	Craftsman	Dr. Henry Lohrmann House	2215 W. 16th St.	1904-07	55164	
	Craftsman/Queen Anne		4926 W. Rockville Road	1901	55762	
Warren	Craftsman bungalow		5805 Southeastern Ave	c.1915	65623	
	various	Irvington Historic District	Irvington	1870-1936	70001-71645	5-29-87
Washington	Craftsman/Prairie	Bernard Batty House	1475 E. 77th St	c.1920	05047	
	Prairie	Roller/Lawton House	7508 Central Ave.	c.1925	05053	
	Craftsman	Howard Johnson House	1281 W. 79th St.	1907	05091	
	Craftsman	Samuel Ralston House	5100 Knollton Rd.	1916	05883	
	Craftsman	Coburn/Kreusser House	4501 Cold Spring Road	1907	14007	
	Prairie	Arthur Wolf House	4136 N. Meridian St.	1923	21005	
	Prairie	Wesley E. Shea House	4366 N. Meridian St.	1921-1922	21021	
	Craftsman bungalow		5850 Carrollton Ave.	1927	24091	
	Craftsman/Mediterranean Revival foursquare	Judson/Moschelle House	4586 N. Broadway St.	1915	26070	
	Craftsman/Prairie	Manzy House	4455 N. Broadway St.	c.1920	26077	
	Craftsman/Tudor Revival style	Wade-Clowes House	4319 N. Broadway St.	1916	27116	
	Craftsman foursquare		3840 Delaware St.	c.1910	29035	
	Craftsman/Queen Anne		3902 Delaware St.	1910	29039	
	Prairie/Craftsman	Johnson House	3947 Delaware St.	1909	29068	
	Craftsman/Tudor Revival style		4930 N. Park Ave.	c.1920	35296	
Center	Tudor Revival style/Craftsman		2845 Sutherland Ave.	c.1915	0740	
	Prairie/Renaissance Revival style	Independent Turnverein	902 N. Meridian St.	1914	1428	12-22-83
	Spanish Mission Revival style/Craftsman	Coulter Flats	2161 N. Meridian St.	1907	1329	5-31-90
	Craftsman	St. James Court	2102-2108 N. Meridian St.	1919	1333	2-12-87
	Craftsman	Cathcart Apts.	103 E. 9th St.	1909	1391	9-15-83
	Craftsman	Library No. 6	1801 Nowland Ave.	1912	1173	
	Tudor Revival/Craftsman bungalow		4604 E. Washington St.	c.1915	2143	
	Craftsman	David Parry House	3650 Spring Hollow Road	1904	05024	
	Craftsman bungalow	Tuckaway	3128 N. Pennsylvania Ave.	1907/1912	07062	9-23-82
	Spanish Mission Revival style/Craftsman	Esplanade Apts.	3015 N. Pennsylvania Ave.	1913	07069	6-16-83
Decatur	Craftsman bungalow		6202 Mooresville Road	1931	80113	
	Shingle Style/Craftsman bungalow		7802 Newton Street	1910	80128	
Perry	various bungalows		University Heights Historic District		86001-225	
Franklin	no sites					
Pike	no sites					
Lawrence	Craftsman	Interurban Station	Ft. Benjamin Harrison Historic District, Bldg #616	1908	01077	6-9-95

Appendix B: List of Illustrations with Sources

Chapter 1

Figure 1. Photo of William Morris. Courtesy of The William Morris Society at <http://morrissociety.org>.

Figure 2. Photo of Red House. Courtesy of The William Morris Society at <http://morrissociety.org>.

Figure 3. Rendering of Arts and Crafts Living Room. University of Toledo, William S. Carlson Library, Ward M. Canaday Center. *The Noble Craftsman We Promote: The Arts and Crafts Movement in the American Midwest*. Toledo, OH: University of Toledo, 1999. Online at <http://www.cl.utoledo.edu/canaday/artsandcrafts/furniture.html>.

Figure 4. Drawing of Craftsman Chair. University of Toledo, William S. Carlson Library, Ward M. Canaday Center. *The Noble Craftsman We Promote: The Arts and Crafts Movement in the American Midwest*. Toledo, OH: University of Toledo, 1999. Online at <http://www.cl.utoledo.edu/canaday/artsandcrafts/furniture.html>.

Figure 5. Photo of Gustav Stickley. University of Toledo, William S. Carlson Library, Ward M. Canaday Center. *The Noble Craftsman We Promote: The Arts and Crafts Movement in the American Midwest*. Toledo, OH: University of Toledo, 1999. Online at <http://www.cl.utoledo.edu/canaday/artsandcrafts/furniture.html>.

Figure 6. Photo of Robie Houses. William Allin Storrer. *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright: A Complete Catalog*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2002. Online at <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago.html>.

Chapter 2

Figure 1. L.S. Ayres' advertisement. *Indianapolis Star*, 5 October 1905.

Figure 2. Photo of Herron Arts and Crafts exhibit. Courtesy of the Indiana Historical Society, Bass Photo Collection number P0130.

Chapter 3

Figure 1. Photo of Shortridge Arts and Crafts pieces. *The 1916 Annual*. Indianapolis: Shortridge High School, 1916.

Figure 2. Photo of Charity Dye. Laura Sheerin Gaus. *Shortridge High School: 1864-1981, In Retrospect*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1985.

Figure 3. Photo of Roda Selleck. Laura Sheerin Gaus. *Shortridge High School: 1864-1981, In Retrospect*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1985.

Figure 4. Photo of Janet Payne Bowles. Barry Shifman. *The Arts and Crafts Metalwork of Janet Payne Bowles*. Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1993.

Figure 5. Photo of Shortridge Arts and Crafts pieces. *The 1916 Annual*.

Indianapolis: Shortridge High School, 1916.

Figure 6. Photo of Harry E. Wood. Courtesy of the Indiana Historical Society, collection number P380.

Chapter 4

Figures 1-22. All photos taken by author.

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1997 Graduate, Loyola University Chicago Chicago, IL
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Survey Assistant, Community Relations and Development
▪ Assist in compilation, writing, editing, design, layout, and publication of county interim reports of surveyed historic properties throughout the state

2003-2004 Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana Indianapolis, IN
Intern, Community Relations and Development
▪ Researched, wrote, and designed a companion booklet for school children who tour downtown landmarks, entitled "My Downtown Diary"; researched and wrote three National Register nominations of historic places

Summer, 2003 Indiana Historical Society Indianapolis, IN
Intern, Department of Public Programs
▪ Researched materials on Abraham Lincoln for the 2004 traveling exhibit on Lincoln sponsored by the I.H.S.

- Edited and proofread historic texts; researched and wrote annotations; assisted with the design for the *American Abolitionists* website

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Assisted with research, writing, design, and implementation of the *Indianapolis in the 1880s* exhibit at the Morris-Butler House, Indianapolis
- Participated in a Historic Administration and Management workshop
- O'Brien scholarship recipient for the 2003 and 2004 O'Brien Conferences for Historic Preservation
- Compiled a case study of a historic Indiana movie theater for the Indiana Department of Historic Preservation and Archeology's March, 2004 Theatre Initiative Conference in Indianapolis
- Published in *The Preservationist*

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Member, Indiana Historical Society

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